

M E M O I R S

O F

M A R Y,

A

N O V E L.

By *Mrs.* G U N N I N G. *ll*

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

V O L. I.

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MEMOIRS

OF

M A R Y.

LETTER I.

*Countess Dowager Auberry, to the Duchess of
Cleveland.*

Riversdale, Jan. 2, 17—.

MADAM,

IN obedience to your Grace's commands,
Miss Montague leaves my retirement on
Tuesday the 9th, to attend you at Rich-
mond. My carriage and servants will
conduct her to you; and, I hope, in safety.
I have not the honour of being per-
B sonally

sonally known to your Grace, nor have I any right to complain of the separation to which necessity obliges me to submit; yet I must lament, that the sun, which has so long illumined my descent into the vale of years, should set to me, and shine only in the hemisphere of fashion;—but the Duke says it must be so; and your Grace thinks it high time, Mary being now eighteen, that she should become acquainted with the world. It was not a very good world when I lived in it, but that was twenty years ago, and perhaps it is now better. It was the will of my dear child's deceased parents, that this their sweet and only blossom should open in the shade of retirement. The charge of fostering the tender plant devolved on me; how I have acquitted myself, her future conduct must evince; the legacy bequeathed to me is no longer binding; I could almost wish I had never known the riches entrusted to my care; when I lose sight of them, I shall be poor indeed.

And

And must I lose thee, Mary!—Forgive, Madam, a very old woman, who, nearly in her second infancy, feels, with all the weakness incident to childhood, how severe it is to relinquish a darling plaything, in the possession of which is comprised all her earthly felicity;—but my Lord Duke and yourself are appointed, by the same authority under which I had my early claim, the guardians of her riper years, if you should condescend to accept the trust; you have accepted it—you even demand to be put in possession of my treasure; and I have nothing to add, but that

I have the honour to be

Your Grace's

Very obedient servant,

M. AUBERRY.

LETTER II.

The Same, to Lady Jane Petworth.

Riversdale, Jan. 2, 17—.

I Know nothing of the Duchefs of Cleveland!—And is it to a woman, of whom I know nothing, that I am condemned to give up a treasure, on which my foul hangs with a degree of dotage which nothing could excuse, at my time of life, but its own intrinsic value? That Mary, that dear son and still dearer daughter's orphan—that Mary is at last to be torn from me, and by authority I have no right to resist.

Cruel Montague! ah, you were proud, you were ambitious or unfeeling, when you thought my protection not sufficient in the noon, as well as in the morning of her days. What will the world do for her that I cannot do? Will your friends, the Duke and Duchefs of Cleveland, love her as I love her?

her? Mistaken man!—thou hadst enough of the world, yet it is plain its follies and its vices had made no impresson on thy callous mind, or thou wouldst not have robbed me of thy Mary—at a time too when I know not how to exist without her. And for whom am I stripped of all my comforts? For strangers, aliens to her blood, who, if they do not despise and ill-treat the dear child, will certainly never love her as I do.

Good God! why should this Duchess want to tear her from my arms? Has she too, no feeling for a poor feeble creature, verging on four-score, that she and the Duke should both insist on having her sent to them before my eyes are closed? They say it is friendship for her father: it is inhuman to me, and nothing that is inhuman can be friendly.

My remonstrances and intreaties have all, all been fruitless; and to-morrow se'nnight——My eyes, I think, are dim; I have had a nervous complaint in

them for the last six days; I must lay down my pen.

Continuation.

My dear Lady Jane, the favour I have to ask from your pity, as well as the friendship which subsisted between us before I secluded myself from that society, which was divested of all its charms, by a stroke of fate, never to be recollected without horror, is, that you will be at Richmond on the 9th of this month to receive my Mary.

I shall tell her how tenderly our hearts have been linked in the bands of friendship; and as you hold her in your arms, press her to your heart, and bestow on her the fond caresses, which I know you will not be able to restrain, when my beloved lifts up her tearful but fascinating eyes to the friend of her parent, then it is
she

she shall forget, in your embraces, that she is amongst strangers; and then shall I almost forget to hate the Duke and Duchess of Cleveland, for claiming the prerogative my son Montague so heedlessly invested them with.

I know the Duke's first wife was your sister; I therefore cannot but suppose you are on a good footing with them—God grant I may not be mistaken, and that your arms may be the first that are opened to receive my treasure. Say you will be there to receive her, and I shall be comforted.

Ah! dear Lady Jane, had Mr. Petworth been returned from his embassy when I became the victim of my last and most bitter misfortune, what a tale should I have had to tell you! But rest my sorrows for the present; in the eyes and in the soul of Mary there will be enough of claims to your affection, without unfolding to your sight the issue of her parents' infelicity.

Tell me a little of this same Duchess ;—her style of writing, methinks, is rather stately ; but perhaps I am out of humour with her, and unreasonably too—if I am, pray undeceive me ; I should rejoice to hear I had deceived myself,—to hear that this woman, so terrible to my ideas, is formed to be the condescending, gentle, and affectionate protectress of my angel Mary. That dear child has done nothing but weep since they signified their desire, or rather command, that she should attend them at Richmond. What have I to say more ? Nothing in the world, but that

I am,

My dear Lady Jane,
Your almost heart-broken,
But very affectionate friend,
M. AUBERRY.

LETTER

LETTER III.

Lady Jane Petworth, to Lady Auberry.

Petworth House, Jan. 7, 17—.

BEFORE my dear and respected Lady Auberry can have broken the seal of my letter, I shall have embraced her heart's darling, her lovely and beloved granddaughter.

The moment I received your commands, I dispatched a message to the Duke and Duchefs of Cleveland, with whom, as you have supposed, I am really on good terms, to inform them I meant to spend some days at their villa, and should dine with them on the Wednesday following. I forbore to say what was the real motive of my troubling them just at this time with my company; I know too much of human nature (though, perhaps, on the long run, that knowledge has not

added very much to my happiness) ever to sow the seeds of jealousy where those of kindness might otherwise spring up and flourish in abundance. Do you apprehend me, my dear friend? I will speak plainer.

I wish your grand-daughter, whilst she is performing a painful penance, that of absenting herself from your presence, in conformity to the will of her father—I would wish her, I say, to shew no ill-judged preference, even for the honoured and grateful friend of her revered and only parent. Those who are appointed to be her guardians in the great world may be silent from pride, or, if you please, call it dignity; but assure yourself they would be hurt by the least infringement of that partiality and fondness, which their consideration for Miss Montague will, I dare say, give them reason to expect shall be decidedly engrossed by themselves.

Our meeting, then, on Thursday, must be, or seem to be, a matter of chance; but whilst I take care not to offend her
noble

noble patrons, by what may appear to them too warm advances of cordiality, and which may draw from her unadulterated heart returns that may not be profitable to her interest or comfort; whilst keeping in the back ground, and soliciting no more than a common share in her good graces, I shall nevertheless adopt myself the steady and fond guardian of her health, her fame, and her repose.

When we happen to be alone, I mean to be largely repaid for my anxiety on her account, by receiving, in part, such caresses as the dear child has hitherto confined to yourself; pray, therefore, be convinced our loves, like all other loves, will not be the less ardent or durable for having some little difficulties to struggle with; nor can it lose any thing of its natural warmth by the veil of concealment I shall contrive to throw over it, merely in consideration to the fashionable feelings of the present hour.

B 6

Dear,

Dear, and ever dear Lady Auberry, what obligations you have laid me under, by transmitting your commands to me, regarding this beloved grand-daughter of your's! you can form no idea of my transports, unless you recall to your generous mind the thousand tenderneſſes you lavished on me in the early period of my life; and when you think of what I owe to your never-ceaſing goodneſs, then, and then only, can you underſtand with what joy I received, and with what diligence I ſhall execute your com-miſſion.

I have alſo a requeſt, my venerable friend, to make on my part—it is, that you will not permit yourſelf to indulge too acutely the regret you muſt unavoidably feel at the deprivation of ſo endearing a companion.

Perhaps the moſt difficult trial that your affections have to experience is already over, and Miſs Montague on her road to Richmond. You will ſoon be familiarized

familiarized to her absence; and every hour that passes, will add to your repose, by bringing nearer to your view the moment of her return. I could, and I would, provide you with a substitute for your lovely Mary during the heavy hours of your separation, if I dare presume her tender offices about your person would be acceptable.

This substitute I speak of is my niece; she is neither very young nor handsome; but for sound judgment, decent vivacity, and evenness of temper, I have seldom seen her equal. Her fortune is not splendid, but sufficiently independent; and, when I was left a widow, my husband added to it a considerable legacy. I must not take a merit to myself which belongs to another, if it can be called a merit, to be the author of a suggestion that may afford a temporary relief to the best of human beings.

Miss Beaulieu happened to be sitting with me when I had the honor of opening
your

your Ladyship's most pathetic letter, the contents of which cost me some tears; I could not refuse the sight of it to my niece's intreaties; and it was then that she made the proposal, which I now only communicate, with my most hearty concurrence and wishes that it may be acceptable to you.

Say, my dear madam, shall I send you this treasure? You have but to command, and she will attend you in rather less than a fortnight. She is to be of my party at Richmond; and if she has the good fortune to be approved by Miss Montague, I think I shall send her to you, either with or without your permission.

Continuation.

I have this moment got the return of my message to Richmond; it is just what I wished and expected. My arrival at the lodge

lodge will precede Miss Montague's but a few hours, which vacancy I shall fill up with laying out a thousand little plans for the amusement of my interesting ward; for in the light of her guardian sylph I shall henceforth consider myself.

I do not, dear Lady Auberry, wish to relieve my more than curiosity, at the expence of recalling those scenes to your memory, which, even at this distance of time, must bring with them, in the retrospection, conflicts and emotions which are at no period of one's life favourable to the human structure; which depends so little on its own strength, that the mind works on it at pleasure; and it is by her alone levelled or supported. I will not, therefore, ask what were the misfortunes of this dear girl's parents—it is enough for me to know that she belongs to you, and is the daughter of that beloved play-fellow who was my friend in the nursery—I had almost said in the cradle.

Continuation.

Continuation.

I have at this instant parted with some troublesome morning loungers, visitors I can hardly call them, they do not mean to be considered as my friends—in truth, they have no meaning at all when they do me the honor to break in on my employments, but merely to amuse themselves, and kill time with as little fatigue as they can. I wonder how your Mary will like them? It is rather dangerous for a young lady to be held up as a pattern for her sex; I hope it will not be her fate, but I am sure she will deserve it.

Instead of a letter, am I not writing you a volume? When I grow tedious, give me a place on your little working table, and take me up again when you grow tired of more important studies; at such a critical moment, trifles have their claim on our indulgence.

You

You ask me for some *traits* of the present Duchess of Cleveland, and shall have the very best I am able to give you. My sister died, and the Duke married again during my long, very long, absence from Britain; but to this hour the Duke, who is a mighty quiet good sort of a man, calls me sister; and as sounds, as well as fevers, are often catching, her Grace does me the honour, sometimes, to address me by the same affectionate appellation. And though there is, perhaps, but little similarity in our pursuits, opinions, or dispositions—yet, on the whole, we contrive to agree together as well as connections of the same description generally do.

Her person may still be called the well-preserved ruins of a most beautiful structure—for, like myself, she has passed her grand climacteric. She wears no rouge; and though time has shaken the roses from her cheeks, she still retains such a portion of undefinable delicacy and grace, as to eclipse youth and beauty themselves, where-
ever

ever she encounters them. A hundred young and lovely women have I admired with pleasure and a degree of astonishment, till they have unfortunately placed themselves too near this extraordinary woman, when a comparison of course followed; and it never failed but that my admiration shifted from those who had first engaged it, and settled on herself.

She has a great deal of natural understanding; but the refinements of a court, and the adulations that have every where met and crowded, as I may say, her path through life, have tinctured her good sense with that kind of deference for her own opinions, as will infallibly make proselytes of bending minds, and which the few only will resist, who are hardy enough to rate independence at a higher value than the favor of a great lady. With the former she is generally surrounded; her table is filled by them, and her assemblies composed of them; as to the latter description of beings, we must look for them beyond these

these circles. I fear independence is not a link in the great chain of fashion.

The Duchess of Cleveland has as much wit as any woman should be trusted with—neither is it always of the most inoffensive sort; it is a dangerous weapon; and the hand that wounds is seldom inclined to heal. This shining talent is never exerted but for the entertainment of her family and particular friends, with whom she lives in habits of familiarity; to others there is more of dignity,—call it *hauteur*, if you please,—than desire to be thought either lively or agreeable, which she can be whenever she pleases. The liking or disliking she takes to people is always at first sight; she is your friend or your enemy for no other reason in the world but as she happens to be pleased or not pleased with the character of your countenance. She possesses nothing like envy; and beauty is the best recommendation to her favor. I mention this *trait* in her humour, that your Ladyship may guess what sort of reception

reception your beautiful grand-daughter might expect—indeed you have not told me that she is beautiful—no matter; I have a lively imagination, and well remember what her mother was at eighteen, so I must have it my own way, and am pre-determined she shall be my beauty at least, though all the rest of the world should be of a contrary opinion.

Continuation.

The size of my letter will explain the cause for that abruptness, with which I am so often obliged to drop my pen and my subject. I verily believe it is impossible for any body in this town to sit down unmolested for more than ten minutes, if their acquaintance happens to be without number, and their sentiments without the pale of fashion. I do not know how, it is become

become so easy, and almost so general, that instead of dismissing our servants for a disregard to truth, the first thing we do is to teach them that a breach of it is their duty. I am not arrived yet to that degree of perfection which can set me above vulgar prejudices; and think I shall retain this, of not insisting that my porter shall tell lies to every body who happens to call when I am not quite disposed to receive them—at least, I will not begin making the experiment till I have thought of some equivalent for the service required.

I have said nearly as much as I can say, consistent with my own observation, of her Grace the Duchess of Cleveland; and as to the Duke, he is, as I have said before, a very quiet, very good sort of a man; and though of a reserved temper, which is sometimes mistaken for pride, it has none of its disgusting effects. His shyness is blended with placidity; and throws no air of restraint on the amusements of his family, or the good humour of his visitors.

I am

I am told his nephew and heir is just returned from the continent; he is spoken of much to his advantage. Would not your little Mary, some hundred years hence, make a most charming Duchess of Cleveland? But be that as it may, the task of describing him, as well as his two sisters, must devolve on her, when she has been long enough an inmate of the family to form a deliberate judgment on their several deservings.

I have the honor to be, &c.

J. PETWORTH.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

*Dowager Countess Auberry, to Lady Jane
Petworth.*

Riversdale, Jan. 9, 17—.

MARY is gone, yet here am I, still loitering, still wishing to loiter yet a little and a little longer—I ask only to have my existence lengthened to her return. I think so now; but, should my petition be granted, who can say what unreasonable request may come next? May I not also desire to see her married; and, after that, to see her the mother of an infant? Perhaps two or three as lovely babes as she was will hardly content me.

Ah! my friend, were we permitted to chuse for ourselves, how ill should we
cater

cater for our true happiness! It is better to trust to Divine dispensations than to mark out any regular plan of our own to proceed by. The wonderful age to which I am already arrived is a blessing, for which I am thankful—the more so, as my downward path has been strewed with the flowers of peace. Would to God the dear hands that strewed them may be at this moment clasped in those of Lady Jane Petworth!—The very idea is a cordial to my spirits.

I really think I shall be permitted again to embrace my darling; my health is wonderfully good; and I will not allow the ugly fiend *Ennui* to dispossess my faculties. I every moment call up the image of my Mary, to fight against the melancholy ideas that want to intrude themselves. I see her kneel at the side of my bed night and morning, to receive the maternal benediction. I feel her lovely white hands—you never saw such hands as my Mary's are—I feel them as they press my shrivelled ones to her lips, and

and to her heart. When I pass into my chapel, her arm sustains me; she kneels at my side; and I catch from her some of that lively fervour that is so beautiful in youth, and so acceptable to God.

Am I right, think you, to bring home these sort of recollections? Right or wrong, it is impossible I should banish them; on the contrary, though we are now, I suppose, a hundred miles asunder, I see nothing but her animated and artless countenance; I hear nothing but the soft tones of her voice. This day my woman brought me a nosegay; I am fond of flowers; she would have placed it in my bosom—I thought of Mary—the task used to be Mary's; I put it aside, and fear I hurt the good creature, for she went away weeping.

Can any body, my dear friend, try to support their spirits better than I do? but if I were inclined to become sorrowful, I should not be singular; there is no dry eye *in* the house; and *without* it, I am told, it is almost as difficult to find one. My

C

chaplain

chaplain is a mighty worthy man—he fears for my health, and he teases me with causeless apprehensions; he loves Mary—but tells me I think of her too much—that he is sure I do not sleep of nights—that instead of taking repose, I am following her carriage, thinking where she is, how she looks, what she does, and conjuring up a thousand chimeras to keep myself waking; but he is mistaken—and I tell him so. I court sleep—it is my best friend—it supplies me with dreams of Mary; and again I live over the scenes never to be forgotten. So you see, my good friend, that I am quite a heroine, quite a philosopher.—Writing amuses me much; and writing of Mary is more than ideal happiness.

Love, they say, makes poets of young men; and why should it not have the same effect on an old woman? When I was a girl, I courted the Muses; they were not uncivil to me then; and, perhaps, in my absence from Mary, I may try to renew my acquaintance with them.

My

My mind is much disengaged from some gloomy ideas, that, against my will, had taken possession of me before I began this letter. I will seize the white moment of contentment to subscribe myself

Your Ladyship's

Most faithful and affectionate servant,

M. AUBERRY.

LETTER V.

From the Same, to the Same.

Riversdale, Jan. 9, 17—

MY scrole of yesterday is gone ; I bid this follow it, on the wings of gratitude, to thank you, and to bless you for your long and charming letter, which I have this moment received.

You will love my Mary—you will adopt her—you will be her guardian sylph—you are pre-determined to behold her with partiality. Methinks I have not now a grief in any corner of my heart.

Dear child ! thou wilt only go from one parent to another.—What a reflection for my agitated mind to rest on ! Pray write
to

to me the moment you have seen her; tell me truly what you think of her; I charge you to look at her eyes; make her unglove too, that you may take notice of her hands and arms. It must be by stratagem, observe, for she hides them as if they were the ugliest things in nature.

I do not half like your Duchefs; but no matter—she m^y do well enough in the public walk of grandeur; and in the private path of instruction you will be her conductrefs. I am fatisfied, perfectly fatisfied.

I joyfully accept the sweet companion you offer me; her confideration for an old woman, like me, fpeaks volumes in her praise. The third part of my heart is her's already; and she may draw on its beft affection for a child's part.

You will not ask me what were the misfortunes of Mary's parents, becaufe you would not diftrefs me. I have thought of a method to fatisfy you, and fpare myfelf;

and you may soon expect a tale of sorrow, but not from my own hand; I shall employ another, who will need no assistance from me. I mean my own woman, who lived with me at the commencement of Mr. Montague's acquaintance with the fainted mother of my Mary; and who still resides with me, rather as my companion than my servant. Oh, may the fate of that mother be averted from her daughter! I wish you to be informed of all the claims my child has to your affection; I therefore close my letter to give Martin some papers that may help to illustrate her little history.

It will appear an age before I can possibly receive another letter from you, or hear again from my darling; I say again, for I have already been enriched with two dear epistles in the course of her journey.

God bless you, dearest Lady Jane! All the tenderness you bestow on my orphan, I will repay to your amiable niece.

niece. The assurances which you give me of tender protection to my love, enables me to sign myself

Your happy friend,

M. AUBERRY.

LETTER VI.

Mrs. Martin, to Lady Jane Petworth.

I AM honoured with the commands of my Lady, to transmit to your Ladyship a circumstantial detail of the events which happened to herself and family after your departure from this country, and during your residence abroad; and she has just delivered into my hands certain memorandums, written by herself, to assist my recollection, as she says; but, with your Ladyship's permission, instead of reverting to them for information, I shall copy them off for your inspection, as they will better explain the situation of my lady's mind at the period they were written, than any weak efforts of my own could possibly do.

Several billets are, I observe, pinned on to the little manuscript; these shall appear
in

in their proper places. I shall endeavour to avoid engaging any unnecessary share of your Ladyship's attention to that part of a very sorrowful history, which it must fall upon me to relate; and shall therefore comprise my relation in as small a compass as the sad events, of which it is composed, will reasonably admit.

Any accounts of Lady Mary Pleydell's person or disposition would be superfluous in addressing myself to her friend, who can best tell how beautiful was the one, and how amiable the other. It would be equally impertinent to remark to your Ladyship on the unbending temper of my Lord, or the sweet complying one of my excellent Lady; the strange dissimilarity between them could not escape the observation of strangers—much less that of your Ladyship. You know too, Madam, with what dotage their charming daughter was beloved by them both. All these matters I leave to your own recollection,

and shall proceed with the events that followed your departure from England.

In the spring, 17—, my Lord and Lady carried Lady Mary to town, for the first time; and on the day of her presentation at Court I never saw Lady Auberry in such spirits; as, when she returned home, she said to me, as I was taking off her hoop, Make haste, Martin, for I am absolutely fatigued with satisfaction. I took the liberty of hoping the business of the morning had not been too much for Lady Mary? Oh, no, she replied—Mary has acquitted herself divinely! The gracious reception she has met with, and the marked approbation of the whole circle, have quite sickened me with pleasing emotions!

From the time of her first public appearance nothing was spoken of, nothing admired but Lady Mary Pleydell; and though she dressed with remarkable simplicity, her woman was tormented with applications for the patterns of every thing she

she wore. Amongst the many candidates for her hand, Mr. Montague, then a Colonel in the Guards, was the most successful. Lady Mary first met with him at the Duke of Cleveland's—at which time your Ladyship's sister was at the head of that family, and its greatest ornament, as I have often heard my Lady declare.

It was his Grace who first made the proposal to my Lord for his friend, but not till my young Lady and Mr. Montague perfectly understood each other; and great was their satisfaction when all her other long train of admirers were dismissed, and himself declared the intended son-in-law of Lord Auberry. Many festivals took place on the occasion, and testified the joy of all parties. The Duke was particularly pleased with the union, there being a great friendship between his Grace and Mr. Montague, arising, perhaps, from the connection of his mother having married the late Duke, which had brought them

early acquainted, and in habits of living together.

Settlements were preparing, equipages bespoke, and cloaths making, when the rumour of some discontents in our American colonies clouded the serenity of the family's aspect; my Lord was sullen—my Lady silent—Lady Mary often in tears—and poor Mr. Montague, unable to account for those appearances, seemed to enter the house in dejection, and to quit it with frenzy.

One day that they had all dined together, and that I had hoped, whatever cause might have happened to derange their felicity was done away, about an hour after we had done dinner in the steward's room, Lady Mary's woman and myself received orders to get every thing ready for their return to Riversdale early the next morning. I asked if Mr. Montague was to go with us? The groom of the chambers said he believed not—for that the Colonel
was

was gone off in a great passion—that Lady Mary was retired to her chamber, weeping sadly—and my Lord and Lady all at sixes and sevens; that I remember was his expression.

My Lady did not ring for me that night, as used to be her custom when she was ready to undress, but went to bed without my assistance, and I saw no more of them till Lord Auberry led my Lady to the coach, at seven the next morning, followed by Lady Mary, who leaned on the arm of her woman; and never did I see such ravages as one night of sleepless agitation had made on the countenances of both the ladies.

When the family were seated, my Lord sternly bade us come into the carriage; and these were the only words I heard him utter from the beginning to the end of our journey. Lady Mary sat between Mrs. Smith and me, and was often so fatigued in the four days we were on the road, that her head would insensibly fall on my shoulder,

shoulder, and leave the moist traces of her uncomplaining sorrow on my bosom. Her tears were without agony—but they penetrated through a very thick cloak, with which I had guarded myself against the cold air of an easterly wind.

The pensiveness of Lady Auberry seemed as unconquerable as my Lord's taciturnity, and was never interrupted, except with a view to withdraw the attention of her daughter from a subject that occupied her thoughts too intensely; some looks of intreaty and some of reproach she occasionally directed to my Lord; but they were equally disregarded.

When we came within a few miles of Riversdale, Lady Mary was seized in a violent shiver, and it was with difficulty we could support her till she came to the house, where she was immediately put to bed, and an express sent away for the family physician, who, on visiting his patient, declared, that though she was inclined to fever, the malady he most feared was

was seated in her mind; and that the end must be fatal if it was not speedily removed.

Here it is, Madam, that I shall open Lady Auberry's book of memorandums, extracting from it such parts as relate, at any period, or in any manner, to the connection of Lady Mary and Colonel Montague.

London, May 2.—I have this day seen the man, who, of all others, I would chuse for the husband of Mary—I have forgot the language of eyes, or he does not regard her with indifference.

May 3.—He has left his name at the door;—how unlucky my Lord and I should have both been out when he called!

I think

I think of nothing but him—what a world would this be, if all the men in it had the soul, the form, the manners of a Montague! The Duke of Cleveland told me last night, that he had more happiness in the friendship of Montague than in all his other possessions.

May 8.—Mary and Montague are now together every day, and all the day long. Is it in nature that they should not see in each other what all the world can distinguish in them both?—I would give her to Montague in preference to a Prince—and if I have penetration, he would esteem the gift of her hand more than he would a diadem.

May 14.—My prayers are heard—
Mary, my darling Mary, will be the wife
of

of Montague—and I experience how possible it is to love, perhaps, with more ardour for one's daughter, than one has ever loved for one's self. My grand-children may one day or other tumble over these my private memorandums; if they should do so, I will here offer them the best apology that can be made for an old woman of fifty declaring a *penchant* for a young man of twenty-four.

Then follow these verses, which I believe my Lady made herself:

THESE questions I ask of my heart,
Why it beats like a bird in its cage?
And why such strong feelings impart,
Inconsistent with wrinkles and age?

Art thou tir'd of comfort and ease?
Warm and quiet thy lodging has been;
Or why, at the close of my days,
Again thy wild frolics begin?

Tell

Tell me, truant, and tell the whole truth,
What makes *me* write verses on love ?
Love only is pastime for youth ;
My thoughts should be soaring above.

Unabash'd by my petulant tone,
My heart boldly answers the charge ;
Refin'd, but not tir'd, I'm grown ;
And the reason I'll tell you at large.

I once play'd my tricks upon you—
That time has gone by long ago ;
So I loung'd in your bosom, *perdu*,
'Till I saw the bud open and blow.

'Tis the beautiful bud of thy youth,
Gentle Mary, engages my care ;
The pupil of Nature and Truth—
So your chidings, I pray you, forbear.

Those feelings of which you complain,
To the treasure of treasures belong ;
To love him who loves her is no sin—
Such feelings are virtuous, tho' strong.

I turn over, Madam, many pages of my
Lady's diary, as I find they contain little
more than a repetition of those particulars
which

which I have had the honor of communicating to your Ladyship; and shall begin again with the

15th of June.

Beautiful and fair are the opening blossoms of expectation; we guard, we watch, we hang over them with solicitude; the warmth of our imagination is the sun to which they expand themselves; but the fruit of happiness, how seldom is it knit on the flower of expectation? Montague is dismissed—what will become of Mary? dismissed by her father! We leave town to-morrow—in what a state of cruel suspense do we bid it adieu! My Lord forbids Montague the house, but refuses to give a reason for his displeasure. What has Montague done! What will become of Mary!

Riversdale,

Riversdale, June 29.

If she dies, I will never, never again see the face of her destroyer. Ah! my poor Montague! and is it possible my hard-hearted Lord can have turned you from his door, when your presence too might have saved the life of his daughter? Martin says it is a fact—I will not believe it possible.

July 20.

Death, the close and busy attendant on the unresisting Mary, is at last dismissed from her pillow—his fallow mantle is now withdrawn from her face.—Shall I not try to make it once more the garden of health? Shall I not try if the presence of Montague will not restore the deserter peace to her bosom?

bosom? Oh, Montague! who can resist thy intreaties? not a mother—not the mother of Mary.

To this part of the book is pinned the following letter, from the Colonel to my Lady, and privately delivered to her in the absence of my Lord:

LETTER.

Has the most amiable of mothers—has Lady Auberry exchanged her soft and gentle nature for implacability? Are all the riches of her inexhaustible sympathy shut out from the participation of a wretch who was once the acknowledged object of her favour? If she does not scorn, if she does not detest Montague—she will hear, she will pity—and, if it be in her power, she will save him from distraction.

Do you know, Madam, I have been driven from your door? Yes—I have been
driven

driven from it like a dog! three weeks ago *your* Lord, the father of *my* Mary, with his own lips, forbade me to approach it! since which time I have wandered round these unfriendly walls, abandoned to all the horrors of ungovernable despair!

She has been ill—she has been dying—she has been at the very gates of death—and I, I who should now have been her adoring husband, am banished, disgracefully banished, not only from her presence, but even from the house that contains my soul's dearest treasure. Am I a culprit, to be treated thus? No, Madam—my honor is unimpeached; and if Lord Auberry has imposed opinions on you to my disadvantage, I must be permitted to exculpate myself from them; you are too good and too just to refuse me a patient hearing.

Recollect, dear Lady Auberry, the change in my Lord's humour some days before his cruel and abrupt departure from London—how miserable it made us—how little we were able to account for it. Your

Ladyship

Ladyship must remember also, that on the last day of my happiness, and the first of my wretchedness, this most capricious of men invited me to his closet—you seemed to foresee his purpose, and retired, with Lady Mary, as I followed him to his cabinet. The air of cold and decided indifference that had before superseded the warmth with which he had espoused my pretensions, was, on this occasion, reinforced with a degree of haughtiness, and I may add hatred, that made me tremble—yet saw I not the uplifted hand of fate, till it had effectually crushed all my expectations of enviable felicity.

Montague, (said he) as settlements are preparing, and the day fixed for your marriage with my daughter, I hope to meet your concurrence to a resolution I have formed on certain political considerations; if you do not accede to my demands, any further negociation is at an end, and my daughter will hereafter dispense

penſe with your viſits, as I ſhall with the honor of your acquaintance.

And what are your Lordſhip's demands? I aſked, in a tone of impatience; hard muſt be the conditions to which I reſuſe my inſtant compliance.

He ſmiled ironically, remained ſilent for a moment, then, looking me ſternly in the face, bade me underſtand that he was no ſupple-jack, that would bend to the touch. I ſhall never recede, added he; and you may determine, without any offence to me, as your inclinations direct you.

In the name of Heaven, I exclaimed, explain yourſelf, my Lord! what is the meaning of this deliberate torture?

Greater deliberation, Mr. Montague, will become us both, he replied—we have had too much hurry in this buſineſs already—in ſhort, I repent of the promiſe I made you; and but on my own preſent terms ſhall you marry my daughter.

Name

Name them, if you would not drive me to distraction.

That is a very lover-like expression, Colonel; but let us try if it has any better meaning than the rest of Cupid's lying vocabulary. Are you ready to quit the service, in consideration of my friendship; or will you for ever renounce it, by carrying arms against your brethren and fellow subjects in America, with whom we wage war unjustly? The regiment to which you belong, I am well informed, is in the number of those appointed by Administration, to execute the savage massacre of their savage contemplation; will you quit the army, I say? will you sell your commission? and will you add the money arising from the sale of it to my daughter's settlement?

I started from my chair, for we had both been sitting, and know not what sort of emotion it was that opposed my utterance; at last I stammered out, Is it with

D

Lady

Lady Mary's concurrence you make this propofal, my Lord?

No.

That No, faves me from perdition, I cried; and I will to you, Madam, confefs a foldier's weaknefs—I felt fome tears fall on my burning cheeks.

Of what fignification is it to you, young man, whether ſhe has or has not been confulted on this buſinefs?—Am I not her father?

Of what fignification! oh, my Lord! her ignorance of your laſt propoſal is of ſuch importance to my peace, that I would not exchange the knowledge of it for the fame of a hero, or the lengthened days of a patriarch.

Will you be ſo good, Mr. Montague, for my better information, to turn from the flowery road of eloquence, and condeſcend to tread, with me, the path of common ſenſe—in which language, perhaps, I may be as good a ſcholar as yourſelf? I
expect

expect an answer to my plain question—Are you ready to comply with the propositions I have made you?

I felt my spirit kindle at the acrimony of his countenance and expressions—I therefore replied with firmness, but with the most perfect respect,

As the father of Lady Mary Pleydell, my Lord, I honour you; I wish to receive from your hand the consummation of my blifs, the affianced bride of my affection.

What, my daughter, do you mean?

Pray, my Lord, permit——again I was interrupted.

I will not permit you, Mr. Montague, to name my daughter, but on my own terms; and, without your full compliance, I now formally retract my consent to her union with you.

You cannot retract, my Lord—you have given it already—I have not deserved to forfeit your good opinion—and will, in future, endeavour still more to deserve it—at any, at all, at every price I will purchase it, except by the prostitution of

my principles, and the forfeiture of my honour.

Then you refuse my daughter?

My God! refuse Lady Mary!

Yes—I, repeat you refuse her; *my* son-in-law shall have less scruples, and more submission.

I have once been honoured with your full consent, my Lord—nor will I ever relinquish it, unless Lady Mary herself commands me.

No, Sir! she shall not condescend to treat with you on the degrading subject; though Colonel Montague prefers his paltry pay to an union with her, as the heiress of my house, she may be quite as fortunate in a more deliberate choice.

Is it possible your Lordship can so cruelly misconstrue me?—am I less worthy of your daughter's affection, because I seek to preserve my duty inviolate, and my honour untarnished? Hear me to an end, my Lord (for I saw the storm gather on his countenance, and ready to fall on me in a torrent of abuse)—hear me, I beseech you.

I have

I have one estate which has not been mentioned in the settlement, take that also—it is more than equivalent to any sum the sale of my commission would produce. Could I purchase, by slavery, the title of Lady Mary's husband, I would wear my chains with pleasure; take, then, my Lord, every thing I possess, but spare my honour.

That is your own affair, Colonel Montague—I have nothing to do with far-fetched consequences—it is not increase of fortune for my daughter, or your honour, as you call it, that I am solicitous about; I have opinions as well as yourself, and an equal right to indulge them. When I made the proposals, which have so highly offended your immaculate notions of honour, I own it was not without hopes they would be rejected; and I thank you for not subjecting me to a disappointment; and, mark me, Sir, added he, with an imprecation of vengeance, from this moment we never meet again, except you are inclined

D 3

clined to call on me as your implacable enemy, which I shall glory in declaring myself to be on every future occasion.

What an interview! what a conference! what a termination to all my hopes! I have seen Lord Auberry once since that fatal day; but to what purpose? to be loaded with fresh insults and cruel indignities. I almost blush to recollect that I have tamely borne them, even from the father of my Mary. I am informed he is gone to a distant county, and will not return for some days—will you admit me to see the mistress of my fate—to see her only in your presence, and that of a friend, who, with your permission, I shall bring with me?—one who is well known to your Ladyship, and reveres your virtues. On your indulgence, dearest Lady Auberry, depends the fate, I had nearly said the existence, of

HENRY MONTAGUE.

Memorandums

*Memorandums continued.**July 3.*

The fair face of Mary no longer resembles a snow-drop, bending on its stalk—already she sees the amiable Montague at her feet! dear Montague! with what eagerness do I expect thee!—he comes—I see him from my windows—and with him—oh! my good God! it is the Bishop of S———!

Evening.

And do I really see my beloved Mary the bride of my almost as much beloved Montague? and have I consented to an union, the consequence of which may be my own misery? well, be it so, if the happiness of my children is secured—yes, ob-

D 4

stinate,

stinate, hard-hearted father, I will endure thy unceasing indignation, whilst conscience acquits me of any crime against nature, or against myself.

July 4.

I have slept, I awake again, it is no dream—Mary is, indeed, the wife of Montague.

Noon.

I have embraced my children—they have fallen at my feet, and wetted my bosom with the grateful tears of sensibility.

Evening.

Evening.

Contentment has shed its vermilion over the cheeks of my Mary; her intelligent eyes sparkle with delight, as she reads in those of Montague, that his passion will never diminish. Can I repent my condescension?

July 5.

How is it I have been surprised into this strange situation? let me reflect a moment—ah! Montague! that friend, that Bishop of S——,—who could withstand his reasoning?—so wise, so just, so truly christian. What said he? I will consider over his arguments, and strengthen my mind by reflection.

D 5

He

He said, the strict engagement into which they had entered, sanctioned by a father's full approbation, was binding and sacred—that the parties so bound were not at liberty to annul the contract, whilst there existed no moral or religious reasons for retracting. He said, if Lord Auberry had been his brother, and from motives, such as he advanced, had withdrawn, after once giving his consent to their union, he would have advised me to sanction it, and himself would have performed the marriage rites, as an acceptable service to his God, in defiance of human caprice and human resentment. Is not this man, this Bishop of S——, eminent for wisdom, meekness, and piety?

July 15.

Here are we, as composed as if nothing in the world had happened—Montague
and

and his friend gone back to town—my Lord returned—Mary every hour improving in health and beauty; she is ascertained of happiness in the first object of her wishes, and has no room in her mind for the reception of imaginary evils; she bears the absence of Montague wonderfully well indeed.

July 16.

I have again been cautioning Martin and Smith, who are the only servants entrusted with our secret, to be on their guard. One would think my Lord had a sympathy of what we had been doing in his absence; he is insufferably morose, and seems to have taken a rooted dislike to poor Mary; I sometimes think he does not wish her to recover—at least, he testifies no pleasure in the amendment of her health.

D 6

July

July 27.

A note from Montague! what can he mean? It is written in a confused sort of manner; he is in the neighbourhood, and wishes to see me before I can contrive an interview for him with his wife, and even prior to her knowing that he is in the country—it is very odd this.

[Colonel Montague's note is pinned on to this part of the Manuscript; but my Lady has so exactly described the contents, that a repetition of it is unnecessary.]

July 27,—Evening.

What a terrible scene! but it is over—and Mary yet lives. Alas! Montague, how will she support thy absence? Eighteen

teen months thou wilt be away—what an age they seem to me! what a blank will they appear to Mary! the dangers of war too, how do they distress her? but thou dost not, my poor child, consider that in the profoundest peace, Death is never idle—that he always stands to his cannon—that his fire is incessant, and his shot unerring.

August 16.

Montague is failed! Mary's heart is bursting with emotions, which, in the presence of her father, she is forced to suppress: on my bosom she reposes them, and we mingle our tears together.

August

August 17.

Unfeeling father! how could you, on reading in the papers that the regiment, to which Montague belongs, is embarked for America—how could you say, in presence of your agitated daughter, I am glad the scoundrel is gone on his bloody errand, and hope the honest Americans will give me a good account of him? Dear, wretched Mary! what must have been thy agony! Is not this beloved Montague thy husband, thy tender, affectionate husband? and will he not be the father of thy infant? The prospect is distant—but, my God, it must come! take Thou, take Thou those treasures of my existence under Thy Holy Protection!

August

August 29.

A sweet smile again occupies the face of Mary. What a letter has she received from the Lord of her heart! he wrote it on his voyage—she has read it, I believe, a thousand times; but can she love such a husband too fondly? No—it is impossible.

September 12.

My Lord talks of taking his daughter to town this winter; he says he is determined to marry her in the course of twelve months, that she may not be ready to take up with Montague when he comes back. I feel, some how, mighty queer when he makes these sort of declarations; but the sentiment it gives birth to has nothing to do

do with regret for the part I have taken, or repentance for its consequences.

I have not contradicted his plan of removal, or about his daughter's marriage; but shall try to avoid the one—the other, thank Heaven, is impossible—Death only can divorce my Mary from her Montague.

October 21.

Heaven be praised! we have this day got rid of some very troublesome visitors. If they were merely tedious and disagreeable, I could forgive them—but I have not the same lenity for gossiping old women and flirting misses; one's temper or one's peace is always in danger in such society. I trembled twenty times a-day, when I saw the curious glances they directed to my Mary; I thought they had conceived some idea of her actual situation. Lady Grimstone did say to me, just before she had the
goodness

goodness to take herself off, If my Lady Mary had been married, Madam, I should have formed certain expectations of happiness to your good Lord and your Ladyship; she looks so delicate, and so languid, that I fear her constitution is very indifferent—I am sure she is devoured with the bile. I often laugh at my girls, who are remarkably bilious, and tell them that the effects of bile and breeding are so much alike, they are hardly to be distinguished from each other—vulgar, abominable woman! thank God, neither my Lord nor Mary were present, when she made the coarse observation; it struck me dumb, but mightily amused the young ladies, who laughed exceedingly.

Your Ladyship will please to observe, that the days and weeks I pass over in the manuscript, from which I am transcribing, contain nothing material to your comprehending

hending what happened at Riverdale, prior to the death of Lady Mary Montague.

The next article I shall present to your Ladyship's notice is dated

January 13, 17—.

A change in Administration, which has brought in many of my Lord's friends, hastens him to town; he does not insist on our going with him, but expects that in two months, from this time, we are to follow him. How providential this arrangement—I was driven to despair!

My Mary's situation is already but too visible—I wonder her father never observed it; nothing but his extreme hatred of Montague, which makes him suddenly turn away from the object which he knew was once so dear to him, can account for the preservation of our secret.

January

January 21.

Lord Auberry is gone; he addressed his daughter, just before he stepped into his carriage, with an air of asperity, which, even now, she calls to mind with the most sorrowful emotions. Mary, said he, when I command you to attend your mother and join me in London, bring with you inclinations of obedience. At our next meeting I shall present you, as a wife, to the man of my own choice, more worthy to be your husband, and my son, than your favourite Montague. D——n the sneaking rascal! my vengeance shall pursue him to the latest hour of my existence.

January 22.

Mary begins to recover from the extravagancy of grief she was thrown into by
the

the last words of her father; I speak to her of comfort—of the happiness she will experience, as a mother—the joy of Montague's return—and even hint to her, that a time must come, when her father's resentment will subside—and assure her, that I will seize the first favourable moment to explain her situation. I endeavour to deceive her, but cannot deceive myself; alas! when will that favourable moment arrive?

March 1.

I have put off our London journey, on pretence of indisposition; my Lord is satisfied with the excuse; or, I should have said, he is so busy in supporting his party, that he gives himself no trouble about us.

March

March 15.

As the time of Mary's confinement approaches, her spirits retreat. Dear, dear mamma! she cries, pressing my hands, it is not the pains of child-bed that terrify me, but——she interrupts herself, pauses, and is sadly silent; I decypher the meaning of that silence—it tells me, that the most formidable of her feelings arise from her fears on my account, when her father shall, by chance or otherwise, be informed of my indulgence to the wishes of two amiable lovers.

April 2.

Every thing is prepared for the reception of the little stranger; and Mary is not only composed, but in excellent spirits—thanks to dear Montague. How welcome

come is his letter at this critical season! how eloquent the language of refined and steady affection!

April 7.

Mrs. Spellman is arrived, and has been presented to Mary—she coloured like scarlet at sight of her; but a few days will bring them better acquainted. She is a sensible, pleasing woman, and skilful in her profession. All but our two faithful female servants suppose our new guest a visitor of consequence—and is she not of consequence? will she not be the guardian of my daughter's safety? is it not from her hands that I shall receive a little copy of my dear, dear Mary's perfections?

All beyond this last article in my Lady's common-place book is a melancholy blank;

blank; and your Ladyship must condescend to accept my well-meant, but feeble, endeavours to satisfy your curiosity, in what remains to be told of this disastrous narrative.

Lady Mary Montague was put to bed on the 16th of April; and on the 17th, at thirty-five minutes after two in the morning, my dear Lady, who, I really believe, suffered more torture than her daughter, till all was over, received into her arms the most beautiful female infant my eyes ever beheld. I will not speak of her Ladyship's transports, as she gazed on the face of her grand-daughter—it would take up a volume to explain them.

Lady Mary was so well on the third day of her confinement, that Mrs. Spellman assured my Lady, in a few days she might venture to dine in her dressing-room, without running the least risk in the experiment. My Lady wished her to be seen by the family, that they might form no conjectures dangerous to the secrecy her
Ladyship

Ladyship was resolved to preserve, and consented to Mrs. Spellman's proposal, whenever Lady Mary should be able to make the effort with safety. On the fourth day her Ladyship was so well, that my Lady, for the first time, said she would dine below; and Mrs. Spellman, who passed for a visitor, attended her down stairs, and left only Mrs. Smith to sit by the bed-side till they returned.

Here, Madam, it is difficult for me to proceed; and I would, if possible, save you from the description of a scene, the recollection of which, at this long distance of time, is almost too much for my weak reason to support. I must not entirely suppress the circumstances; but, for your Ladyship's sake, as well as my own, I shall shorten them as much as the nature of my painful task will admit.

As soon as my Lady was gone down to the dining-room, Lady Mary desired Mrs. Smith to give her a book, which she was reading when taken in the pains of labour;

hour; the poor girl did as she was bid, and afterwards, by her Lady's commands, drew back the curtain at the foot of the bed, to let in the light. Her Ladyship having kissed the infant that lay sleeping by her side, she insisted on her woman's taking a walk in the garden, that she might not hurt her health by so close confinement to a sick room—her commands were so positive, it was not possible to resist them;—she has since told me, her heart failed her as she shut the door after her, with an intention to find me out, and send me to supply her place;—not meeting with me in my own room, she went up to the attic story, where I kept such stores as were committed to my care;—unfortunately I was in the steward's room, or the most dreadful calamity of my life might not have happened, and it was so long before she found me, that Lady Mary was left alone near a quarter of an hour;—I smelt a strong smell of fire when I reached the door of her apartment, and thought I heard her

E

Ladyship

Ladyship finging as she used to do when in health, and her mind at ease; alas! it was not the work of imagination, but a too fatal reality!—some linen that hung at the fire, I suppose by the snapping of a coal, had caught in a blaze—the fright had affected the dear Lady's senses—nor did she ever recover them to the moment of her dissolution, which took place before any of the faculty could be brought to her assistance.

I must beg your Ladyship's permission to lay down my pen at this place, and also to pass over the agonies of my Lady, for a repetition of which I am totally unfitted.

Mrs. Martin in Continuation.

Good God, Madam! in what a dilemma did I find myself. My Lady could give no orders—her faculties were suspended—her life in danger.—My Lord expected—

expected—the infant concealed in the house, but unprovided with a nurse, Lady Mary having intended to take the office on herself, as long as her father remained in London, or till he should send for the ladies to join him there; nobody but myself to inform Colonel Montague of his irreparable loss—the situation of the family—and the birth of his daughter. My mind was a chaos of confusion, but I did the best I could; I sent an express to Lord Auberry, with tidings of Lady Mary's death—I said she had died suddenly, but durst not explain any more of her situation, and informed him my Lady was not expected to survive her daughter many hours.

The accounts I sent to Mr. Montague, the packet being at that time going off for New York, were less alarming, in point of my dear Lady's danger, but the intelligence of Lady Mary's dissolution could not be withheld from him—he outlived her just long enough to make his will, which bequeathed his whole possessions

to his infant daughter, and to write a letter to my Lady, the purport of which was to request that Miss Montague might be christened by the name of her mother; and, if it could be possibly avoided, not made acquainted with her parents misfortunes, till time and experience of the world had strengthened her mind to bear the repetition of them with equanimity; that his marriage with Lady Mary, and the birth of her daughter, might remain a secret to Lord Auberry, he also desired, as the only method to preserve my Lady's domestic peace, and secure the repose of his infant—that his fortune was more than sufficient to render her perfectly independent of her grandfather, whose rooted aversion to himself would probably devolve on her. To make the secret of her birth more secure, he proposed that she might be bred in retirement during my Lord's life, but desired it might be in the neighbourhood of Riversdale, where my Lady might occasionally inspect the management of the
nurse

nurse to whose care the infant was confided.

This will, and this letter, were inclosed under cover, directed to me, long before my dear Lady's health and composure were enough established for me to deliver them into her hands, and not till after Colonel Montague's name had appeared in a list of the slain in some engagement with the Americans, but I forget where.

Lord Auberry did not come down to Riversdale so soon as I supposed he would have done, nor was his presence any consolation to my Lady when he did arrive;— I will take the liberty of repeating his first salutation, on going to the bed-side of the insensible, I then thought the expiring mother of Lady Mary Montague,—Madam, said he, you are a great fool to torment yourself at this unreasonable rate;—Mary was *my* daughter as well as your's, yet I would a thousand times rather see her dead, than the wife of your favourite Montague. Thank God, my Lady was insensible

to this cruel reflection, or it would have killed her at once.—She does not know it to this hour, for I never repeated it to her.

Your Ladyship is doubtless trembling all this time for the poor baby, and anxious to know how I managed to keep her from the sight of my Lord.—I had no Lady to command me what to do, and no guide to consult with better than my own feeble judgment, Mrs. Spellman being gone to avoid suspicion, and Mrs. Smith in a state of distraction, from considering herself as the fatal cause of an accident the most fatal—I'll tell you, Madam, how I contrived, and it happened to be right, as it coincided with Mr. Montague's posthumous directions, and met with my Lady's approbation, as she afterwards assured me.

As soon as I had conveyed my Lady to bed, sent for two physicians different ways, and dispatched an express to Lord Auberry, I left the house unperceived, with the infant concealed under my cloak—I
knew

knew there was a poor woman, the wife of a labourer, who had lain in about three weeks before; she lived not more than four miles from Riversdale, and to whom I had sent baby clothes and other necessities by order of my Lady, because they had been represented to her as clean industrious people, but very poor, and burthened with a large family.—I meant to have walked all the way with my precious charge, but meeting with a return post-chaise going the same road, I got the driver to set me down within a hundred yards of the cottage where I meant, at least for the present, to deposit my burthen;—I had taken particular directions as to the situation of it, having frequent occasions of sending relief to its inhabitants, but had never seen either the man or his wife, and my person was entirely new to them.

When I entered the cottage, the first thing I saw was Dame Estridge, (for that was the name of the woman) chearfully cutting a slice of wholesome bread from a brown

loaf, and distributing it to half a dozen rosy-cheeked children, the eldest not more than seven years of age, and the youngest in a cradle near the fire;—I had not a moment to spare in making unnecessary observations or enquiries; the appearance of them altogether shewed enough of comfort and cleanliness to satisfy me;—and, producing the dear child, I requested she would immediately sit down and give it the breast—she did as I desired, and her own little ones all gathered round her, not as if they envied my infant the luscious repast, but rather to look at, admire, and caress the pretty stranger.

I told the good woman, according to a plan I had laid down in my way to her habitation, that I was aunt to the babe she had in her arms; that its mother was dead; and that my brother-in-law, who lived in London, had taken up such an aversion to the child, as had induced me to steal it away, lest he might do it an injury.

The

The Lord in Heaven bless me! cried she, dropping the child on her knees, and lifting her hands and eyes with a look of astonishment,—hate his own babe! and such a baby too! why he does not deserve to live on the face of God's earth:—I suppose he is a grand gentleman; a poor man would as soon eat his own flesh as see a hair hurt that belonged to their own children; but perhaps this gentlemen do not think Miss is his own flesh.—I replied, men were sometimes very unaccountable, and took strange fancies into their heads;—that I had been told she had lately increased her family; and, if she would take the charge of my young kinswoman, and give her a share of her milk, I would pay her twenty pounds in hand, and give her the same yearly, as long as the child continued to improve under her care.—Its name, I said, was Mary Wilson; that she had been privately baptized; but that one day or other she would have a grand christening, which would be very

profitable to her, if I could get a great lady, whom I had in my eye, to stand god-mother; in short, Madam, the honest innocent creature joyfully accepted my offered terms. I instantly put the money into her hands; and, having got possession of the cradle for Miss Montague, without dislodging its natural tenant, whom I placed at her feet, I hurried back again as fast as I could, to attend my dear afflicted Lady, without creating the least suspicion in the family—the confusion of which continued so violent, that nobody thought of asking me where I had been, or what had detained me so long, though I was absent more than two hours.

There are two circumstances, I believe, omitted in my detail, that ought to be mentioned; one, that the Bishop of S——, who married Lady Mary, happened to be in the neighbourhood of Riversdale at the time of her Ladyship's becoming a mother, and had given private baptism to her infant;—the other, that when I carried her

to Dame Estridge, I concealed my face so much with my hood, besides covering one of my eyes with a handkerchief, under pretence of having an inflammation in it, and speaking in a feigned voice, that in all my future visits, which were very frequent, in the character of my Lady's almoner, the good woman never recollected that it was from my hands she received her nursing, whom I had the pleasure always to find improving in health and beauty, with an absolute dominion over the heart of her nurse;—she was never tired of praising the dear baby, and seldom failed to give me the history of how she came by it, with a circumstantial relation of the fabulous story of my dead sister and cruel brother-in-law.

After my Lady's recovery from the jaws of death, and the first agonies of despair, she dragged on a miserable existence—which nothing could have made supportable, but the stolen interviews I contrived for her, under the character of my fellow servant, with the only remaining object of

her affections, the many cruelties of my Lord to his angel daughter having totally alienated them from himself, to fix them on the secreted branch of an illustrious but blighted family.

Before Miss Montague had attained her fourth year, it pleased Heaven to remove Lord Auberry from this world, I hope to a better—since which time my Lady has scarce had this beloved grand-child out of her sight; and if the separation that has lately taken place does not injure her Ladyship's constitution, she may live to see her third generation of grand-children; her faculties are not decreasing, and her memory is unimpaired.

The first day of Miss Montague's absence, Lady Auberry's spirits forsook her; and I have not seen her so melancholy since the death of Lady Mary; but your Ladyship's very kind and seasonable letter has nearly restored them. She is already counting how many months it may be before she can reasonably expect her to return—

turn—in the mean time the apartment she so lately occupied is getting in readiness for the reception of your Ladyship's niece. Happy, madam, shall I be, when Miss Beaulieu takes possession of it!—what an amiable young lady must she be!—my Lady is quite penetrated with her goodness!

Any thing that I can say of Miss Montague your Ladyship would surely deem officious, as by this time you will have formed your own judgment of the loss my Lady must have sustained, in being deprived of her company. I hope she has not spoiled her eyes with crying. I went with her twenty miles, the first day of her journey, and she wept the whole time.—When I see that dear face again, may it be dressed in smiles; and may some great gentleman, amiable and handsome as her father, be her lot; but forbid it, good God! that her fate should resemble that of her mother's.

I believe I forgot to inform your Ladyship, that poor Mrs. Smith survived Lady
Mary

Mary but a few weeks; and never came out of her room after the fatal accident, or ever ceased reflecting on herself, as being the unfortunate occasion of it.

I have now obeyed the commands of Lady Auberry; and shall be proud if they be executed to your Ladyship's satisfaction—being, with the profoundest respect,

Your Ladyship's highly honoured,

And most obedient,

Humble servant,

JANNET MARTIN.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

*Lady Jane Petworth, to the Countess Dowager
of Auberry.*

Richmond, Jan. 13, 17—.

I Purchase a short moment, dear Lady Auberry, at the considerable expence of your Mary's society, to tell you she is arrived in health and safety; she will, no doubt, give you an account of her reception before she sleeps—I can, therefore, have nothing to say, except to acknowledge that the opinion I had framed of your grand-daughter has not accorded with the laws of precision. What a fine idea had I formed, truly! why I expected to have seen a finished Venus! and find only an unfinished woman.—an absolute
3 stranger

stranger to all the airs and graces, that, in our world of fashion, are the very criterion of female perfection!

What signifies the speaking language of her eyes, if they say nothing but what is dictated by an innocent, inexperienced heart? Can you conceive that the lillies and roses, which are not bought of Warren, will bring her any credit? on the contrary, we hate all partialities of nature, because we have no share in them—and love only those general benefits, which every woman of spirit may procure if she pleases. What does it matter if her hands are like Parian marble, or the colour of a chimney-sweeper's, when she does not know how to admire them herself, and is perfectly ignorant as to the flourish that might be given them in the eyes of others? In short, Lady Auberry, I would tell you, Miss Montague is a being, so singular, that, I should say, I had never seen any body who resembled her in person or manners, if I did not think her a little like
you—

you—very like her mother; and, I must confess, with all her deficiencies in point of *Ton*, I am, nevertheless, inclined to love her, with the same ardour that you do.

I have just enquired for her—am told she has taken leave of absence, and is retired, to write to your Ladyship by this night's post, so that you will receive our letters together; and I shall not feel myself offended if the seal of your Mary's should be first broken.

I have the honour to be, &c. &c.

J. PETWORTH.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

Miss Montague, to Lady Auberry.

Richmond, Jan. 13, 17—

WHEN I wrote to you on my journey, dearest grand-mamma, though not happy, I was composed, because I could think of you and Riversdale without interruption; but here it is quite another thing—and, if I am not more happy, I am, at least, a great deal more confused. Perhaps, after a day or two, I shall get over some part of my shyness; and what now distresses me may then be more tolerable.

I got to Richmond just two hours ago; it is now near six o'clock, and, I understand

stand, the family hour is seven—so I shall not stay a moment after the dinner-bell has rung; for when I begged permission of her Grace, that she would allow me to let you know I had finished my journey, she hinted her hour of sitting down to table; and then, not unpolitely or unkindly, added, you will not make me wait, my dear—there is nothing in the world I so much admire, in young folks, as punctuality.

I cannot yet tell you how I like the Duchess of Cleveland; but will try if I can form any opinion of her Grace by to-morrow; she received me very graciously; but her graciousness is not so mild—so complacent—so touching, as the graciousness of a certain person, whose image is always before my eyes, and will ever be so, as long as I am absent from Riversdale.

I have not seen the Duke yet; but he is to dine at home, and brings home company with him, so the Duchess told me, and desired I would make some alteration
in

in my dress—for she wished I should appear before him to advantage, as he had a more than common regard for my parents. This, undoubtedly, was very good-natured in her Grace; and though I am a little fatigued with my journey, and a great deal embarrassed, to find myself surrounded by strangers, I will try to obey her, when I have finished and sent away my letter.

I have seen your amiable friend, Lady Jane Petworth—and it will not take me up till to-morrow to tell you how I like her. I know but one woman in the world whose countenance and manners, at first sight, has such a claim to one's affection. She received me, for your sake, with distinguishing marks of regard; but, I fear, she afterwards thought me undeserving of them, for the Duchesse talked a great deal more to me than she did, though my eyes intreated her to take a part in our conversation.

Her

Her niece, Miss Beaulieu, went this morning to town with the Duke, and comes back with his Grace to dinner. I wonder if I shall like her as well as I do her aunt? I really think I could speak my whole heart to Lady Jane, the very same as I could to yourself, from whom no thought of your Mary shall ever be concealed. Has not your wisdom guided, your indulgence soothed me? Have you not taught me to conquer my childish partiality; and restored that peace to my bosom, which a perfect indifference for Lord Auberry could only have effected?

I shall write to you every day—though, perhaps, I may not send my letters quite so often. I shall keep a sort of journal, as you desired me to do; and when I have scribbled my paper to the brink, I shall say to it—Fly, envied messenger, to the hands of Lady Auberry, and present to her a faithful picture of her Mary's inmost thoughts—of her duty and affection for the
best,

best, and the very best beloved of parents.
Good night, dearest, dear grand-mamma!
tell me if you ever dream of

Your own

MARY MONTAGUE.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

From the Same, to the Same.

Jan. 14, 17—.

I Went to bed so late last night, that it was eleven before I opened my eyes this morning. I chid my foster-sister, that she had not awakened me before; but she said, indeed, I went often to the side of your bed, and found you sleeping so sound, that I am sure your grand-mamma would never have forgiven me if I had disturbed you. The natural and true observation recalled, oh! what did it recall, of tenderness to my grateful mind? The recollection of all your goodness to me, rushed, at once, into my heart, and from thence found an easy passage to my eyes. I begged poor Jenny's pardon; and we were as good friends as ever.

I came

I came down to the drawing-room, yesterday, a few minutes before dinner was announced—but stopped short, as I reached the door, panic-struck; nor, to have gained the world, could I proceed a step further. A servant had his hand on the lock—I cried out, Sir, Sir, will you be so good to acquaint Lady Jane Petworth that I—that is—that somebody wishes to speak to her Ladyship: he did as I desired; and, in a moment, Lady Jane came to me. Is it you, my dear? said she, kindly taking my hand—I am much flattered, by your shewing me so charming a proof of your confidence; but why this timidity? the circle you fear to encounter are all disposed to admire you. Thus encouraged, I pressed her hand, to signify my gratitude; and, plucking up as much resolution as I could, I followed her into the room.

The Duchefs was still in her apartment; but this I did not perceive at first—for it seemed to me as if all the world were collected, in her Grace's drawing-room, to
stare

stare me out of countenance. Lady Jane led me to the Duke, and, afterwards, presented her nieces to me; and I was not mortified by observing marks of disapprobation in the countenances of either.

The Duke saluted my cheek, and told me I had a double claim on his affections; he first loved me for my father's sake—and should now love me for my own. Miss Beaulieu, who, without being handsome, has a certain something, infinitely charming in her smiling, good humoured face, and easy elegance of address, said she should put in thus early for a share of my good opinion, from the interested motives that I would recommend her to the favour of Lady Auberry. Before I could reply to this obliging compliment, the Duchess of Cleveland came out of her dressing-room, and the conversation became general. I do not know how to account for it, but I found myself much more at my ease, before dinner was half over, than I expected to have been in two or three months, at

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the

the soonest; and here I will give you the best account I can of the agreeable individuals who formed our delightful supper, as well as dinner party.

I begin with the Duke, who is a well-looking man, that I should suppose to be about forty, if you had not told me his age was fifty-five. He has a proud look, yet I observe that no-body seems afraid of him; and, though he speaks little himself, he listens, and sometimes smiles, at the nonsense of other people, which convinces me he is not ill-humoured—nor does he seem to demand that attention which haughtiness always exacts, so that I cannot prevail on myself to think him a proud man—a reserved one he certainly is.

I thought, by this time, I should have been able to form some opinion of the Duchess; but, dear grand-mamma, I am as far distant as ever; I know no more of her to-day than I did yesterday—I could have told you then that she is beautiful, though not young—I can now only add,
that

that she pleases every-body, yet that nobody seems to understand her disposition—it changes with the swiftness of time. I have already thought her gay and grave, flighty and sentimental, tender and severe, selfish and generous, haughty and humble, benevolent and satyrical. Sometimes she appears to have a heart formed of the softest materials, and then gives you reason to think it is made of adamant—how, then, can I spell such contrarieties, or put them together? What I most like her for is, that she treats the Duke with a great deal of affection and respect, whilst the civilities, with which she distinguishes his relations, are strongly marked.

The Honourable Mr. Lexington, nephew and heir to his Grace, was here yesterday, accompanied by his two sisters, and will be first mentioned of all the charming party, because I have already said something of Lady Jane Petworth and Miss Beaulieu, though not the hundredth part of what I am inclined to say.

Mr. Lexington puts me very much in mind of Lord Auberry ; he is nearly of the same age, size and figure, but has a great deal less reserve in his manners, and, I dare say, a great deal more sincerity in his heart. We had a little dance in the evening, and I had the good fortune to be his partner ; he seems well bred, lively, and good humoured ; and I was the better pleased with him, because he not only let me talk about you and dear Riversdale, without shewing any symptoms of *ennui*, but when politeness sometimes obliged me to drop the subject, for fear it should tire him, you cannot think with what eagerness he would himself renew it.

He said he was in love with you, and would go a thousand miles to see you, if he could but flatter himself that he might be one day or other ranked in the number of your friends ; and I was so delighted with his wish to become a candidate for your favour, that I promised to be his advocate, if any chance in the world should
ever

ever happen to bring you to London.— Did I think, he asked, if there was any probability of your coming to town this winter? I shook my head, and sighed from the bottom of my heart, whilst I pronounced the cruelest of all monosyllables; then, said he, you must promise to take me in your hand when you return to this dear grand-mamma, and say that you have picked up a poor distracted lover, who will receive his cure only from her hands. I could not help smiling, and telling him I was afraid his case was a desperate one, for I was sure you would never marry again: yet she may accept my proposals, said he—and I certainly will try my luck, if I can ever be so happy to obtain your permission for my making the experiment. Oh! Sir, I replied, you have it already; but remember, I tell you that you never will be my grand-father.

I was almost vexed for having ventured to speak with so much freedom, when I saw him ready to expire with laughing,

though he endeavoured to hide from me, as much as he could, the effect my odd answer had produced on his nerves. I tried to be more grave; but he was so comical, till he had brought me into good humour again, that it was impossible for me to be long angry, either with myself or him.

Miss Lexington and Miss Maria Lexington are both very handsome, though in a different stile of beauty. The eldest is fair, and has a countenance something like the Duchess of Cleveland's, very sweet and languishing; and she copies her Grace, I perceive, in her movements and the tones of her voice, which, in the original, are the most graceful that can be imagined—and, though not quite so striking in Miss Lexington, they certainly do not misbecome her.

The youngest is a brunette, has a round face, sparkling black eyes, white teeth, a great deal of colour, and anxiously watches the looks of her sister, as if she held her in the highest veneration; they
are

are both doatingly fond of their brother, and think no other man should be looked at when he is present.—

The Duchess has sent for me, so I must go to her, but will return to you as soon as I can.

Continuation.

My business in her Grace's apartment was to chuse my cap and gown for the birth-day; I begged that I might leave the choice of them to her, but I met with a rebuke that silenced me—Miss Montague, said she, I do not like to see any thing so mighty indifferent as you seem to be on the subject of dress;—I did not altogether approve of your negligence yesterday; a muslin gown, large cap, and velvet collar, might have done very well in the morning, but—she was going on, I felt the tears rush into my eyes, and I coloured like scarlet;

—do not be angry, my dear, continued she, in a milder, and kinder accent, I do not mean to reproach, but to advise you. I said I was perfectly satisfied of her goodness to me, and only felt sorry that I had unintentionally offended her; adding, that I would in future make it my study to obey her in every thing.—I dare say her Grace meant this gentle chastisement for my advantage, and am grateful for it; only I wish that she would look a little more like my dear grand-mamma, when she condescends to point out any of the many inadvertencies I must of course fall into, from my entire ignorance of the world and its customs;—her Grace was so pleased with my reply, that she kissed my cheek, said I was very compliable, and was sure Lady Auberry must be a most excellent woman, from the very proper education she had given me;—away flew my chagrin, away flew all tokens of displeasure, and we employed ourselves half an hour in the choice of my finery;—I wished to have had a pale
blue

blue sattin, but was over-ruled; and as many very showy patterns were displayed for my chusing one of them, I fixed on a lilac colour ground, enriched with a silver lilly of the valley, with green leaves; and her Grace, who paid many compliments to my taste, said, that with my permission, she would take it on herself to order the trimmings for it, as well as the ornaments for my cap, and all the other little requisites that would be necessary for the grand-daughter of Lord Auberry, on her first appearance at St. James's.

I was in hopes, when I went to the Duchess's dressing-room, to have found Lady Jane or Miss Beaulieu there; for I don't know why it should happen so, but somehow or other, I do not find myself very comfortable when I am alone with her Grace;—I wish I could define my feelings to you, for I really cannot understand them myself.—I do believe I made her Grace angry with me, before she gave me the

check I have just repeated; for when I opened the door, and saw nobody there but herself, I very foolishly asked her what was become of the ladies, whom I had left with her Grace when I went up stairs to write; I shall never forget how she drew up her neck, and how she looked, though at the time I thought it was only one of those shifting attitudes, of which I have already seen a great variety; but her answer to my question convinced me the alteration that had struck me was less the effect of chance than displeasure,—I really know not where they are, said she, nor do I ever trouble myself to ask how my visitors chuse to amuse themselves;—I look upon you, Miss Montague, as my ward, not as my visitor, and I flatter myself you will not find my company so very disagreeable, that I should suppose it necessary to call in the aid of any chance people who may happen to be in my house, to assist me in entertaining you.—I felt very foolish, and was glad when
she

nurse five guineas, and tell her it is the New Year's Gift of your Mary,—that my foster-sister is very well, and wishes to be at Riversdale again almost as much as I do.—The first dinner bell has rung; adieu! dearest Madam, I will send away this to-night, and begin another letter to-morrow.—I am going to put on my white sattin that is trimmed with the fine point you gave me; I do it to please the Duchefs, and to preserve the peace.—I always find it more difficult to conclude a letter, than to write one, because I know not how to express my duty and affection in any sort of terms adequate to its own strength, for which reason I will have no conclusion at all.

LETTER

LETTER X.

From the Same, to the Same.

Richmond, Jan. 15, 17—.

YESTERDAY we had nearly the same dinner party as the day before, with the addition only of two or three young men, who came with Mr. Lexington, and brought with them good humour and better appetites—for, it seems, they had been hunting with the King for more than six hours. As I took my seat at table, the Duchefs gave me a smiling nod of approbation, when she saw my muslin had given place to fatten, my large cap to a turban handkerchief, and my velvet collar to a single row of pearls.

I sat

I sat down next to Lady Jane, who, whilst she was saying something to her Grace, slipped her hand below the table—I put one of mine into it—she pressed it most kindly—and, turning round, asked me, with an air of indifference, where I had hid myself the whole morning, that neither she or her niece had seen me since we parted after breakfast?

Mr. Lexington answered for me, and said, with a very grave air, Miss Montague, Madam, has been communicating happiness to one of the most respectable women in the world—she has been writing to Lady Auberry. You are perfectly right, said I, as to the nature of my employment; and, perhaps, not altogether wrong as to the consequences my letter may produce in the heart of a parent, so tender and so partial: but how, pray, did you get your intelligence?

Sympathy, replied he, is my informer. Am not I in love with Lady Auberry? can any thing be more natural than that I should

should have my reveries of felicity—that the image of my divinity should pursue me?—It is really the case—and I have never once seen your dear grand-mother, in my ideal interviews, without beholding you, by the same force of imagination.

Did you ever hear of any body so odd, and so droll as this Mr. Lexington? I hope, when he takes up the honors of his uncle, his present ease and good humour will not be crushed by the weight of his coronet.

We did not dance last night, but had music before supper, and catches after; the gentlemen did not go away till a very late, or rather early hour—and invited themselves to dine here again to-day, but her Grace would not give them leave; she meant to move her family on Sunday, perhaps might change her mind, and be in town sooner; they might enquire for her if they pleased; and, when they knew she was come, they might suppose she would
be

be glad to open her doors to her friends at all times.

Miss Lexingtons dined here yesterday, but did not stay long after dinner. What do you think they told me?—and I am sure I did not mistake what they said—that they were engaged to go to one concert, three assemblies, and a ball, after they got home, and all in one night. Is it possible? said I to Lady Jane Petworth, after the ladies were gone—perhaps I misunderstood them—I think they could hardly mean all these amusements for one evening. “Such Things Are,” my dear, replied she, and folly is certainly the fashion—yet it is not so very catching, but that a young lady, who comes from the pure air of the country, may, with a little caution, escape the infection.

Will you not teach me, said I, how to use these preservatives? I am too young to be my own physician. Most certainly, replied she; and to-morrow morning,
added

added her Ladyship, when the Duchefs is engaged, as I know ſhe will be, in giving orders to ſome trades-people, whom ſhe has appointed to be here at twelve, I will come to your chamber, and, if you have the goodneſs to admit me, we ſhall there be more at our freedom, to ſay what we pleaſe to each other.

How enviable the felicity! cried Mr. Lexington, who juſt then came up to us, and heard, it ſeems, the laſt ſentence pronounced by Lady Jane—how enviable the felicity, to ſay what we pleaſe!

And who prevents you? ſaid her Ladyſhip, ſmiling—not your uncle, I am ſure; and as to your ſiſters, they have ſpoiled you from your cradle—in ſhort, we are all afraid of you—we tremble at the very ſight of you.

Ah! there it is, replied he—there is my heavy miſfortune—love caſteth out fear!

That idea need not diſtreſs you—the fear I ſpeak of has nothing to do with reverence—but is of that ſort, one is apt to

to feel if a mischievous child comes too near one—we may love the child, though we keep him at a distance—and he might speak, when we were in good humour, if he would not talk nonsense, and tell people strange things, that they ought not to credit.

You are a charming creature, said he; and if I dared to speak, it should be only the most serious truths—and I would force you to believe them. Does Miss Montague encourage me to declare them?

I do, with all my heart, cried I, laughing. Can we ever be the wiser or the better for all the good things you could say to us, if you are resolved to keep them to yourself?

The Duchess swam out of her apartment at this moment; at her presence we all dispersed, and were silent.

I repeat all our little conversations, because you commanded me to do so; and because I always think, when I am writing to you, that I am present with you, sitting
by

by your side, and contemplating your dear benign countenance as I tell you all my perambulations, all the wonders I have heard, and all the strange sights I have seen. At present I am barren of subjects; and, perhaps, when I get to London, I shall complain that I have more than I know how to manage.

Jenny has just brought me a short note, which she got from Lady Jane's woman—and here it is:

NOTE.

The Duchess has insisted on my sitting down to chess—her people of business were counter-ordered—I find she is very partial to you—and we must not give her cause to suspect that you have any favourite in this house,

house, but herself. Forgive my vanity; but, if I do not misread your expressive looks, you have already imbibed some of those sentiments of affection for me, with which I was prepared to meet you—and which have been increasing from the moment I first saw you. My niece would have had the honour of engaging you for half an hour, but, on second consideration, I have forbidden her; we shall meet in London without reserve.

My Answer, sent back by Jenny.

No, dearest Lady Jane, you do not misread the language of my heart, and, except my grand-mamma, no-body in the world shall take precedence of you there, as long as it is really my own kingdom, and I have the government of it. I shall observe your commands, and obey them.

This

This is all for your sake, that your Mary is so much in favour with this good friend of your's; so far from deserving it, on my own account, I should imagine, from the sense I have of my great inferiority, that she must almost consider me below mediocrity. I will give you one specimen of my awkwardness, out of the many I could relate, if I had a mind to impeach myself. Last night, when the Duchess beckoned me to her, I was in such a fright at the idea of crossing a space, that appeared to me as broad as the continent—for I was sat down as far from her Grace as the room would admit—that, what did I do, but, in passing under one of the chandeliers, which none but a fool would have done, I caught my feather on fire; and what might have been the consequence of my folly, if Mr. Lexington had not flown to my assistance, and put out the flame with his hands!—though in doing it he scorched them considerably.

The

The Duke is very good to me, and encourages me to form a better opinion of myself than I am inclined to do ; he often talks to me of my father, and says my mother was one of the handsomest, as well as most amiable women of her time. Why, dear grand-mamma, are you always so silent, when I would talk to you about them ? When I have but mentioned their names, your face, which before was smiling and chearful, has been covered with tears and sadness—yet would you never tell me why you wept, or why you was sad. You have taught me, grand-mamma, never to repine at the dispensations of Providence ; you have more enforced the lesson on my mind by example than precept ; and yet there are moments when you certainly regret those beloved children, to whom I owe my existence, more than you would have done, at this distance of time, if their fate had not been tinged with the peculiar colouring of misfortune.

Dearest,

Dearest, best of parents, I throw myself at your feet for pardon, if my inquisitiveness has grieved or offended you—I am almost tempted to destroy my letter, that I may not run the risk of doing either; but when I consider how difficult it will be to write it over again, and how impossible to expunge from it what I have written with more melancholy than discretion, my mind changes; and I venture to let it go as it is, with this request, that whilst you forgive my almost criminal curiosity, you will not attempt to satisfy it at the expence of that peace and that composure, which is a thousand times dearer to me than my own. But, before I send this away, I must tell you all, and what made me so very foolish to mention a subject which I fear has distressed you.

Do you remember your grand-father, Miss Montague? said the Duke to me yesterday, as we were walking together on the pleasant terrace before the windows.

No,

No, my Lord, I replied—I believe he was dead before I was born, or died very soon after.

You are mistaken, child—you was four years old at the time of his decease.

I believe I looked surpris'd, as this was the first time I ever heard my grandfather had lived to see me. I remember my nurse used to tell me, when she came to Riversdale, after you had taken me home, that I must love and obey my good grand-mamma, for that all my other parents were gone to Heaven before I was as high as her knee: and once, when I asked you if grand-papa loved your little Mary? Alas! my child, you said, thou wert never received into the arms of Lord Auberry. All these circumstances struck loud on my memory, and made me change colour; the Duke took my hands, and pressed them between his own. How I admire the prudence of Lady Auberry! said he; she will not always, my dear, suffer you to remain

remain uninformed, as to the history of the house from which you are descended. I desire you will ask me no questions—but wait, with patience, her own time for disclosing it.

I wish I had obeyed his Grace's commands with exactness—I should then have had no occasion for self-reproach—but, I do not know how it was, the subject was uppermost in my thoughts, and I laid hold of it without design—I may say too, without reflection. I will never, never renew it again; and will endeavour to forget that I have done wrong, when you have the goodness to assure me, under your own signature, that you forgive your Mary, and love her as well as ever.

There is a strange noise of people running up and down stairs—I wonder what it can mean?

I sent Jenny to enquire, and find all the confusion that alarmed me is occasioned by the servants having received orders to pack up immediately, for that the Duchess

G

is

is determined to dine in town this very day, instead of going there to-morrow evening. Jenny says, that all the women are grumbling at the abruptness with which her Grace's orders have been issued; I only wish we may not be on our return to Richmond before we are got half way to London; however, whilst Jenny is getting me ready for this sudden journey, wherever it may chance to end, I shall step down and try to find out the cause of it.

Three o'Clock.

The carriages are at the door—and in less than ten minutes we shall be on the road, and, I believe, are pretty secure of not turning back again. Her Grace complains how horridly stupid it is not to have one man in the house except the Duke;
and

and only a family circle to make a dull evening still duller, by retailing sentiments to each other that have been retailed a thousand times before; and, to avoid the evil, two servants are forwarded, to acquaint some of her most particular friends that she shall be in town, and at home, this evening. When we leave Richmond, I shall see no more of dear Lady Jane till to-morrow; she has asked, and obtained permission to take me with her to church in the morning—and has bade me be ready soon after eleven, when she will call and take me up. I wonder the Duchess had not rather chosen that I should have attended her.

The Duke knocks at my door, and bids me make haste, every thing being ready, and the ladies only waiting for me.—Adieu, dearest grand-mamma, till to-morrow!

LETTER XI.

From the Same, to the Same.

London, Jan. 15, 17—.

I HAVE no sleep in my eyes, though it is past one o'clock, nor shall I get any when I go to bed, for fear by to-morrow I should not be able to remember what has happened this evening.

We reached Grosvenor-square just as the day had closed in, but the moon and the stars almost compensated for the absence of the sun; it is the brightest night I ever saw—but so cold, that every thing one touches seems to freeze. The Duke and Duchess got first out of the coach,
and

and ran, shivering, as fast as they could into the house. I had reached the pavement, and was following them, when a man, muffled up in a great coat, passed me very swiftly, and said, in quick accents and a tremulous voice, Remember, Miss Montague, there is a person in the world who has claims on you, which he never will renounce.

Something struck me, at the moment, that he had the air and voice of Lord Auberry; when I got to the drawing-room, I was so confused, that the Duke said, this cold wind, Miss Montague, becomes your complexion; you carry the roses of June, in defiance of January's frost. I think she has too much colour, replied the Duchess—it is more like a woman of fashion, rather to want that vulgar ornament than to be over-burthened with it. Pray, my dear, go to your toilet, and, for Heaven's sake, lay on as much as you can of cold cream, that, when you come down to dinner, you may look like other

folks. The Duke said, with great kindness, I think, Duchefs, she had better look like herself——he added something else, but I did not stay to hear what it was, so glad was I to make my escape and follow the servant, who attended to shew me the apartment allotted to my use.

This voice, I think, is still sounding in my ears—and possessed me so much when I went down to dinner, that, somehow or other, I looked round me, as if I expected to have seen Lord Auberry seated at the table, for I was five minutes too late, and I found a large party in the dining-room. I was vexed, but could not help it—I did not use to be long dressing—I believe I was too deeply occupied by my recent adventure, which made me forget every thing else, that ought to have been remembered.

Ah! my dear grand-mamma, has not Lord Auberry, by his own *intentional* neglect, deservedly forfeited my esteem? I
will

will think of him no more—and am sorry I have thought of him so much.

The Duchess was in great good-humour, and did not even look reproachfully at me for being so late. One of the gentlemen, I believe it was Mr. Lexington, said, as I opened the door, Here she is; which made me imagine that I had been the subject of conversation, and that the lecture I deserved was laid aside or postponed, at the intercession of some benevolent beings, who had become my mediators.

The company I found assembled consisted of eighteen persons, our own family included, which gives me a striking proof how very friendly the disposition of this sort of society is to each other. I have heard so much of etiquette, the ceremony used in great houses, and the immense time it requires to send out cards before you can bring any body to them, that I was quite astonished to find such a number collected together at so very short a notice. The men, for the greatest part,

(one or two exceptions I will allow myself to make) were very lively and entertaining; six or eight of them I had seen before, in the two days I passed at Richmond. As to the ladies, who were only four, I was an absolute stranger to them; but they are such very particular favourites of her Grace, were so much at home in her presence, and distinguished me with so much kindness, that, after the first palpitation of my heart had subsided, I recovered my speech, and could even speak a whole sentence without looking like a fool. It is true, I did sit by Mr. Lexington, who is so droll, yet so polite and attentive, that it is impossible to be very much frightened when he happens to be your next neighbour; you see nothing formidable in the rest of the circle, because he contrives to engage all your attention to himself.

Good night, dearest grand-mamma! I must go to bed, or shall not be ready to attend Lady Jane when she calls for me in the morning.

Continuation.

*Continuation.**Jan. 16, 17—. Evening, 10 o'Clock.*

Jenny has been crying her eyes out—I asked her what was the matter—and the poor girl told me, sobbing, that she believed the Duke and Duchefs were no christians—nor, indeed, any of the fine ladies and gentlemen who came to visit them—and she was afraid they might inveigle me to become a papist as well as themselves, for that, notwithstanding it was Sunday, all the servants in the house were at cards—and she heard that the same wicked works were going on in the drawing-room—for her part, she had come up stairs to pray that I might not be drawn into the snares, which, it was plain enough, they had laid to entrap me.

She had heard her mother say, who had it from a young man who had travelled

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from country to country, and from one papist town to another, that, in foreign parts, they cared no more for a Sunday than any other day in the week! and that every body they could persuade to be of their minds, would be one step in their own way to Heaven—and so, no doubt, all arts would be tried to make a ladder of me.

I have satisfied the agitated mind of my foster-sister, as well as my youth, ignorance and inexperience would give me leave; I have convinced her, that the papists, as she calls them, are christians—that neither the Duke nor Dukes are of the catholic persuasion—and that I am not in the least danger of becoming one—she blesses God for it, but wishes we had never left Riversdale, where the Sabbath was always kept as it ought to be.

When I think of you, with how great fervency could I unite my wishes to those of Jenny! and perhaps some of her ideas, though simply expressed, are pretty much in unison with those I entertain, which I shall

shall take care to keep to myself—for what right have I to censure the opinions of others? it is quite sufficient for a girl, like me, to preserve and regulate her own.

The reason why I was permitted to go to church with Lady Jane Petworth is, I find, because the Duchess never goes herself—her health, she says, will not allow her to get up early enough for chapel. I have not yet seen the domestic chaplain, but I suppose there is one, who officiates in her closet.

Do you know, I create surprise in every body, merely because I am not myself surprised! they expect me to be all astonishment and wonder at every turn of a street, and every carriage that passes me, and I disappoint them, by only answering, but seldom asking a question!

I think I may say that I took leave of Sunday at the chapel door, as I did of dear Lady Jane in Grosvenor-square; I asked her, at parting, if she and Miss Beaulieu were not to dine with us? for I had heard

there was to be a great deal of company ; and she mortified me, by saying, she never chose Sundays for visiting her great friends ; but, added she, if you are not very lazy to-morrow morning, let me see you in Bruton-street—the Duchess gets up late, so will not miss you. I want to say a thousand things to you—and we shall have had a comfortable breakfast together, before one half the fine people have left their pillows.

Her Ladyship offered to carry me to the Park ; and I should have been most happy to have gone with her, had not the Duchess told me the preceding evening, she should be ready to take me there at three o'clock ; but I will write no more now, or I shall receive a reprimand when I go down.

Continuation.

Continuation.

I return for half an hour; every body was so busily engaged, that I slid into the room, and round a dozen card tables, quite unnoticed, till I came to that at which the Duchefs presided—half the company were sitting at the corners of the tables, and, though not playing themselves, seemed as much interested as those who were; and I heard one of the lookers-on say, I have lost an hundred pounds by that card—which I cannot account for, or even imagine how it could be possible.

I had stood a moment behind the Duchefs's chair before she perceived me; I said something, I do not know what, that made her look towards me. My dear, said she, how have you been diverting yourself? are you dead? I stared, not understanding what she meant; but when she added, have you not been playing at commerce?

commerce? I only replied—No, indeed, Madam, I hardly know one card from another—I have been writing to Lady Auberry—and, if I have your Grace's permission, shall return to finish my letter. She had just taken up a new deal, and said, Pray, child, go where you please—but do not stand any longer by me, for I have not had one good hand since you have been at my elbow.

Rejoiced at my unfortunate physiognomy, I thanked her Grace, and was moving off with as much haste as I could, when I found myself surrounded by all the gentlemen, who were not actually engaged in the parties, and it was with difficulty I escaped from their polite, but very pressing intreaties, that I would not leave them—about which they made a thousand fine speeches—and those fine speeches, I suppose, wanted nothing in the world but truth to make them irresistible. You, grand-mamma, will be at no loss to find out the source of my wisdom in these matters ;

matters; young as I am, have not experience and Lord Auberry taught me the lesson of discernment, to have done with them all? I must add an observation or two before I go down to supper.

I have been used to form a very erroneous idea of people, particularly my own sex, who pass their lives in dissipation. I had supposed the vortex of pleasure must, in some degree, be fatal to all natural affections, and much more so to the feelings of friendship and philanthropy; on the contrary, the few days I have passed in this new world have convinced me how much I am mistaken—in the first instance I have seen a great deal of even more than family harmony—for I never knew relations fonder of each other than the Lexingtons are—friendship thrives abundantly between their Graces and their Graces' visitors—and as to philanthropy, sure it is expressed in the cordiality with which they accost one another, and the warmth of kindness they liberally bestow on myself.

I must also have been mistaken in my opinion, that the Duchefs of Cleveland is not at all times equally agreeable—no, ſhe cannot be capricious, becauſe all the ladies, who form her daily circles, declare that ſhe has not a ſingle foible. It is wonderful how much they are all attached to her—and with what aſſiduity they watch her looks, to catch the very firſt indication of her wiſhes ! if ſhe looks paler than common, they are diſtracted, for fear ſhe has taken cold ; and if ſhe goes into her own chamber, they lament that her Grace does not appear to be ſo well as ſhe was yeſterday. I have ſeen one lady, who actually ſhed a great many tears, when her Grace was not preſent to thank her for them, becauſe ſhe had juſt before complained that one of her toe-nails was grown too near the fleſh, and pained her exceedingly.

Continuation.

*Continuation.**Jan. 17, 17—.*

Dearest grand-mamma, I am transported with joy, to find that Miss Beaulieu is determined to be your visitor after next week. I should say a great deal more on the delightful subject, if I was not sure that, to you, my sensations will need no explanation; she is the most amiable creature in the world—and I intreat you to love her, not quite so well, but the next best to your Mary.

Since I left Riversdale, I have not known so happy a morning as this has been—how invaluable is such a friend as Lady Jane Petworth! how entertaining her conversation! how instructive her council! it appears to me as if I had already caught some part of her experience by intuition. I shall treasure up the knowledge she has taught

taught me, as misers do their gold, and have recourse to it as often.

Last night I was wise in my own conceit, and to-day I find out that I know nothing, at least nothing of that sort of life into which I have so lately embarked. Was I not last night prating to you of modern ladies and modern manners? I renounce all my newly adopted and erroneous opinions of very fine people's affections, friendships and philanthropy—and will, in future, content myself with those which I imbibed at your feet.

I shall, some day or other, communicate to you all that has passed at Lady Jane's, and give you the characters of certain ladies, whom I may almost call inmates of the Duke's house—not as they appeared to be, but as they really are.

I shall not write again till the day after to-morrow—to-morrow! what have I not to go through to-morrow! I am frightened to death at the tremendous ceremony! but I keep my fears to myself—it is more tolerable

tolerable to bear them, than to be laughed out of them. The Duchess has the goodness to train me; and the Duke says I shall do very well.

I am this moment going with her Grace to make some purchases; I suppose it will be six o'clock before we get back—I shall, therefore, seal this letter, and leave it to the care of my own man, that I may be sure of its going. The Duchess has sent for me—all that can be felt of duty and affection I feel for you.

MARY MONTAGUE.

Continuation.

We return sooner than I expected, and I add this wrapper to my letter, that I may tell you I have seen him again—I am sure it was Lord Auberry—he was riding in the Park, with a very beautiful woman.

I should

I should not have been so certain that it was him, if he had not moved his hat to the carriage as we passed near him; the time he has been abroad makes no alteration in his figure or countenance; they are both exactly the same as when he was last at Riversdale.

Men, they say, do not change after they are five-and-twenty, which was his age, you know, at the time I am speaking of. I should have said their persons do not change, had it ever been suggested that the sentiments and inclinations of man were invariable at any period.

I am glad he is no acquaintance of the Duchess's; she took the compliment of his bow to herself—nor did I undeceive her. Who can that be? said her Grace—I believe all the world know me, but I never give myself the trouble of recollecting them. I made no reply—indeed I was silent more than a minute; it was not, dear madam, a silence of confusion, but of reflection. Lord Auberry is of no importance

portance to me—I saw him with as much unconcern as I should have seen any other man, with whom I had the slightest acquaintance; but the strangeness of his address to me on the pavement (for now I am sure it could be no other than himself) recurred to my imagination, and threw me into a reverie, from which nothing could have awakened me so effectually as hearing your dear name pronounced by the Duchess; and the very odd question that followed it, prevented me from returning to the solitude of my own thoughts; but as I cannot make an end of her extraordinary subject of conversation in this letter, I will not begin it. I shall neither forget the matter or the manner—and will keep them in reserve till I write again.

LETTER

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LETTER

LETTER XII.

Lady Jane Petworth, to Lady Auberry.

Jan. 18, 17—.

I AM enchanted with your grand-daughter; I have this day seen her dressed for Court; my niece and I had both the honor of assisting at her toilet.—Would you ever forgive me, dear Lady Auberry, if I was not to tell you she looked like an angel?—I do tell you so, and I am much mistaken if she is not told the same thing by more than one of the other sex before we see her back again.—I am an old politician, you will therefore excuse me from giving you any description of her clothes, or how they became

became her; where her diamonds were placed, or how many plumes she wore in her hair; all these particulars I shall leave for my niece, who sets out to receive your commands next Tuesday;—this letter will precede her,—and pray admire my management, by leaving her something to tell you, and keeping you a little while in suspense; shall I not augment the impatience with which you will expect, and the pleasure with which you will receive her?—forgive this levity,—I know you will be glad to see her for my sake, and, when you know her, you will love her for her own.

Happy Lady Auberry! I cannot drive this charming girl from my thoughts.—I have a thousand things at this time that ought to engage my attention, but she supercedes them all.

I never knew such a progress as she makes in one's affections; we must be incapable of a preference, if we refuse it to her; even the Duchess of Cleveland speaks of her with more warmth than is natural
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to her constitution; and as to the Duke, I believe he half adores her;—when I speak of Mr. Lexington, I will not stop at half;—he idolizes her in the extreme.—He has made me his confidant, but I have not yet trusted Miss Montague with his secret;—I would willingly have her make the discovery of it herself; but she is so decidedly inconfident of her own powers, that she does not understand him, though his looks and his language are so very plain, that many a girl of fifteen would read them with facility.—Her's is not the trick of a coquet, a made-up ignorance, which, in reality, has nothing to do with nature or innocence: neither is it want of sensibility; the spark of soul that animates every feature of her intelligent countenance forbids the supposition; it has its origin in modesty, and has been nurtured by the unaffected wisdom and sanctity of Lady Auberry.

I have yet spoken to you only of Mr. Lexington, who, I confess, has engaged my
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my good opinion, in preference to the many competitors who, I foresee, are determined to oppose his pretensions; and this partiality, perhaps, is a little selfish, because he alone has endeavoured to interest me in his success, whilst all the others leave me nothing but my own penetration, by which I can fathom their intentions. I will give your Ladyship a sketch of two or three who are, I believe, pre-determined candidates for the honor of being elected the partner of a heart, where bribery will never influence, and where no species of corruption will ever enter.

Lord Selby is not more than two or three and twenty, his understanding moderate, but after all sorts of fashionable employments, and fashionable levities, his pursuits are immoderate; of course, those estates which came unincumbered to him, on the death of his father, have received no addition to their value by his own good œconomy; though, to do him justice, I

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dare say it has been nearly as good as any other man's œconomy, who has the misfortune to be left his own master at eighteen, with the heavy weight of a coronet, and the still greater burthen of twenty-five thousand pounds a-year committed to his charge;—a little folly, a little spendthrift-like idleness, I would readily pass over, because in the mind of man, as in a well executed picture, we look for shade as well as light; and we should be neither a judge of nature's works, or the perfection of the artist, if we did not expect to meet with it in the very best productions of both.—The vice I dislike in Lord Selby is the vice of affectation; nature never intended him for the walk he has chosen;—a man who endeavours to gain the admiration of our sex, should set about it with diffidence, should seek to engage a heart, rather than demand it as the prize of his own deservings.—Lord Selby is not incumbered with any thing like softness; he has no condescension but
for

for his own opinions, and if, like the Grand Sultan, he was to throw his handkerchief, he would expect the lady herself should stoop to take it up. Should he put it in Miss Montague's power to refuse his proposals, (for accept them I am sure she will not) it gives me pleasure to think, that though his haughtiness may be hurt, his repose will remain undisturbed; I repeat, it will give me pleasure, because, of all the misfortunes of my fellow creatures in which I sympathise, there are few that interest me more tenderly, than when such a being as your grand-daughter is the object of a strong and lively passion,—that passion, should it prove unfortunate, such a disappointment, if I am not very romantic in my ideas, when it happens to fall on a true son of sensibility, is never got over so effectually, but that it is liable to tincture the colour of his future fate with moments of regret and dejection.—Well, but to have done with Lord Selby in a dozen words more,—

he runs counter to nature in every thing; a lover without humility, a fox-hunter without strength, a gambler without judgment, and a critic without learning.

Sir James Melvern scarce ever removes his handsome eyes from the face of Miss Montague, and his sighs are sometimes quite audible;—I heard a young lady tell him the other night, she must remove to a greater distance from him, or all her powder would be shipwrecked in the tempest of his emotions.—He is rich, good humoured, and temperate; plays on the fiddle, puts puzzles together, and is perfectly inoffensive.

Lord Silvester is one of your fine dancing men, who holds in sovereign contempt every other species of exercise or amusement;—he has declared, that if Miss Montague dances as well as she walks, and preserves only the degree of colour she has at other times, he shall pronounce her a divinity, and never worship at any other shrine.

None

None of these, my dear madam, can ever be your grand-son, though I shall be much mistaken if they do not very soon, every one of them, lay themselves at your feet for acceptance ; there are many others who seem to have caught the infection of *la belle passion*, but I cannot enumerate them all.—Mr. Lexington must be brought forward in my picture, but shall not be crowded into it; and whilst the others are thrown into the back ground, he is the only figure to whom I would direct your attention ; but first I must go a little into the history of his family, that, like me, you may hereafter be able to account, and not much to his disadvantage, for some traits in his conduct, which, without this explanation, would often appear indefensible, as I confess they did to me, till I learnt the cause from himself.

Before the late Duke of Cleveland married your dear unfortunate Montague's mother, he made a sort of provision for his two youngest sons, Lord Henry and

Lord Francis, but so inconsiderable as hardly to deserve that it should be called a provision,—not more than five hundred pounds a year to each of them,—and, considering the immense entail on the Marquis, with the Duke's new engagements, and perhaps a second family, I do not believe he had it in his power to do much more for them.

Lord Henry's spirit was not paired to his finances ; he despised living at home, and accepting a place at his father's table, when he could not afford to keep one of his own ; he therefore bought a commission in a new raised regiment, married for love, and embarked for the West Indies with his pretty portionless bride, and all within the short space of a month from the time he became his own manager ; thus commencing soldier of fortune, he pursued every advantage of his situation, till by dint of friends and money he had purchased a majority, at the expence of all his little fortune except two thousand pounds,

pounds, and also acquired the character of a dauntless hero at the very low price of an arm, when he nobly offered himself to head a small army of chosen men, on a service of extreme danger ;—he recovered from his wounds, but the hopes he entertained of a reward from his country were daily perishing under the laurels with which various successes had covered him.—As his fame increased, so did his family, and nothing diminished but the last two thousand pounds he could call his own ;—he bore many disappointments with patience and manly fortitude ; but the loss of a beloved wife, who left him the father of three children, with little to support them, awakened him from his dream of composure ;—he wrote his father a letter full of complaints, and inclosed another to the minister, filled with that sort of haughtiness which a man of birth and merit must feel, when he finds himself forgotten or neglected.

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I lay down my pen for the present; it is past six o'clock, and the chairs are in sight.—I promised my darling charge she should find me here at her return from Court;—my niece would have attended Miss Montague to the morning drawing-room, but the Duchefs desired, if she did not mean to go both morning and evening, it might be deferred to the latter, as she should have a long string of her own people crouding on her in every possible direction, to compliment Miss Montague on her presentation;—this is a way of speaking that would not become every body, but is so conformable to the mode and manners of my self-elected sister, that was she to assume habits more pleasing, they would still want the power of charming, from being less natural.—Miss Beau-licu is gone home to dress,—she meets us at dinner.—When I have heard all that your dear Mary has to tell me of her adventures, and when they all go back to St.

St. James's in pursuit of more, I shall, by my own fire-side, dedicate the remainder of the evening to your Ladyship.

Continuation.

Your grand-daughter came home from Court looking like a witch, a very Circe,—and I would advise you to send for her, and to keep her locked up in the strongest part of your castle; for if she is seen much longer at large, I fear her own sex will try the enchantress, and should she weigh a grain more than the book, they will certainly denounce against her, without benefit of appeal from their sentence:—Not in the least fatigued was your Mary—no lady-like complaints—no affected palpitations—no langour of *ennui*—ease, harmony, and unstudied vivacity, unfaded
H 5 cheeks,

cheeks, and eyes sparkling with delight, was all that I saw, and all the account I can give you of her.—I think it should suffice to justify me in my fears for her safety, for as soon as she becomes the object of one sex, she will assuredly be the detestation of the other;—what is there that a woman of *Ton* cannot bear with more philosophy, than to see herself eclipsed by a little country girl, who has been brought up in the lap of Nature; and will not learn better, though there are a hundred young ladies who would willingly instruct her in the same accomplished arts, by which they have themselves attained the summit of perfection?

The Duke was quite in spirits, so was the Duchess; they said a thousand things to your Mary, which I should have thought flattery, had they been addressed to any body but Miss Montague;—on my usual plan of politics, I asked very few questions, and seemed to interest myself with no extraordinary warmth when they told me,
with

with as much exultation as if she had been their daughter, how properly she acquitted herself, how graciously she had been received, and how generally admired;—my ears opened to catch her praises with thirsty impatience,—I could have pressed her to my heart, and called her the child of my affection, but my emotions not being those of an intoxicated enamorata, I had them so much under controul, as to reply, with evident marks of indifference, I was very glad that their Graces were so well satisfied, and had no doubt but Miss Montague would always deserve their protection and very partial approbation;—How can you, sister, replied the Duchefs, express yourself with so much coldness? why cannot you feel some part of my sensibility?—What good would it do Lady Jane, if she had as much of it as you have, my dear? said the Duke drily; are your dispositions, your peace, or your constitution, benefited by those abundant feelings?—Oh! no, returned she, they are troublesome enough,

I must confess, and have half destroyed me.
—Why then would you persuade me, said I, to adopt an evil with which nature has not encumbered me?—Because, replied she, I think it is one of the most graceful features in the minds of people of fashion, and distinguishes them from the rest of the world.—God preserve us! cried the Duke, laughing, if we had nothing else to distinguish us but our *feelings*, in that case, I fear, we should find Nature had dealt with us like a step-dame, and that all her own children are better provided for than ourselves; what say you, Miss Montague?—She answered, smiling, Must I contradict you, my Lord? experience teaches me, since I have had the honor of being under your protection, that benevolent and kind hearts have no partial abode, but may be found in a palace as well as in a cottage.—I ventured unobserved to look my approbation; my brother-in-law did not confine his to the rules of silence; but the Duchess desired we would have done with sentiment,
for

for of all the beaten roads of dullness, that was the dullest ;—she then touched her repeater, and it struck seven ; she rose from table with an air of fatigue, said she must have some powder put in her hair, and went into her dressing-room, desiring Miss Montague would do the same, who wishing me a good night, did as she was bid ; but when the door was shut, she beckoned my niece, and they went out together ; I staid but a few minutes after them, and am now sitting by my own fire-side in all the luxury of solitude.—I lay down the pen to refresh myself with a dish of tea, and a pinch of snuff, and as the time of my repast will not be lengthened by ceremony or scandal, I shall very soon return to your Ladyship and the Lexingtons.

Continuation.

Continuation.

Lord Henry Lexington did not live to receive the answers to those angry letters he had sent to Britain;—from an open, gentle, mild temper, he suddenly grew suspicious, choleric, and offensive:—One day, as he was at dinner with the mess, the conversation happened to turn on a young man who had just quitted the service, because his pay would not support him in it like a gentleman; it was in general agreed that the reason was not sufficient; but an officer who sat near Lord Henry, and to whom he unfortunately addressed himself, happened to dissent from them all, and declared it as his opinion, that a man had better earn his shilling a day by hard labour, than live as an officer of rank on any thing below a regiment; unless, added he,

he, still applying his discourse to Lord Henry, one's friends come down handsomely, or one happens to have an independence of one's own.—Lord Henry made no reply, but hastily left the company, and when the officer came back to his lodgings, he found a note from his Lordship, demanding satisfaction for the insult offered him in the illiberal reflections he had the impertinence to address to him in the mess-room, appointing time and place, but leaving the choice of weapons to himself.

Unconscious that he had given his Lordship any offence, and far from having intended it, he was thunderstruck at reading the contents of the billet, and returned to the party he had so lately quitted, to consult with them how a meeting so groundless might be avoided, without impeachment to the honor of either party; both were exceedingly beloved by the whole society, and every possible means was taken to reconcile the difference, but without

out effect;—Lord Henry said, the officer who had given the offence was well informed of his wretched circumstances, must therefore have done it to insult him, and nothing but the blood of his enemy could wash away the stain his pride and his honor had received.

Before the combatants met, the poor, infatuated, unhappy Henry consigned his three children, a son and two daughters, to the care of a friend, who, if he should happen to fall, promised to convey them to England, and place them under the protection of the late Duke, his father;—the consequence of this meeting was fatal to his Lordship, and the friend did as he had engaged to do; he carried them immediately to Britain, and their orphan heads were sheltered under the roof of their grand-father.

Henry Lexington, for whom I am interested, and in whose favor I wish to interest my revered Lady Auberry, was the
eldest

eldest of the poor deserted babes; deserted I surely might call them, for the late Duke received them into his house, fed, and clothed them,—his protection extended no farther; for at his decease he made no provision for their future establishment, but recommended them to the care of his son, by whom he was succeeded. Fifteen hundred pounds, the poor remains of their father's shattered fortune, was every shilling they were entitled to call their own.

It was very soon after their grandfather's death that the present Duke married my sister. I need not recall to your Ladyship's mind what a heart that amiable sister possessed; nor do I give the whole merit to her, of the Duke's consideration for his nephew and nieces, though the former is very willing to place the greatest part of it to her account; and when he spoke of her to me, a tear fell on his burning cheeks, flushed with recollection, and glowing with the divine animation of tender gratitude.

My

My sister, it seems, adopted these children, and they experienced from her all the love and all the attention of a real mother. Mr. Lexington was sent to Eton at an early age, from thence to the university at Oxford, and finished his education by making the grand tour, with more advantage to himself than is commonly understood to be the case with our modern young men of fashion, whose prospects of honours and affluence in their own country occasion them to be rather negligent in collecting any very considerable store of foreign acquirements.

In prospective, nobody's views of aggrandisement could be more ample than his were before he was five-and-twenty. The Duke had been twice married, yet he had ever kept his post in the peerage as heir apparent; and now I think there does not remain the remotest chance that any little Marquis will arise to dispossess him of it.

I have

I have said nothing yet of his sisters; perhaps it is because I have given all my love to their brother, and have nothing to bestow on them:—They were bred at a boarding-school, and if I can form any judgment from appearances, the nature and variety of their scholastic pursuits have rendered them highly accomplished, at least in their own opinions. To the Duke they are submissive, to the Duchess something more than submissive;—they are really fond of their brother, appear to admire your grand-daughter, and are civil to me; but seem to have lost every idea of their early protectress, or at least to have forgot that she has a sister still living, who, for her sake, would have been inclined to give them her friendship, had they shewn any desire to possess it.

There are spots in the sun; and in the atmosphere of fashion there are many doubtful characters, and some that will admit of no doubt at all;—for as long as our
married

married women contrive to keep well with their husbands, that is to say, as long as they preside in their houses, and do not quit them to live in defiance of order and decency, their private amusements are overlooked, and the doors even of good people are open to receive them.

When a young Lady is initiated into this sort of mixed circles, if she has too much candour, or too little penetration for the purposes of discernment, it is possible, in the choice of her friends, she may be misguided by appearances, and the consequences may be troublesome, when too late she finds out the deception of appearances.

Candour is the characteristic of Miss Montague; it is the very essence of her nature. At the Duke of Cleveland's she must every day meet with women unlike herself, and the more dangerous because they are agreeable, entertaining, and specious. The warmth and innocence of her own
heart

heart must give a false colouring to every object ; she will see the modish vices of levity, envy, and artifice, in masquerade ; and though it is impossible that purity like hers should be contaminated by example ; yet, without a guide, her steps may be entangled. Who then shall tear off the mask ? Shall I keep the experience of fifty years to myself, who am trotting down the hill of life as fast as I can ; and shall I communicate no portion of it to the daughter of the first and best beloved of my friends, who is but just beginning to set her feet on the slippery ascent—who is committed to my charge, and for whose safety I hold myself responsible to Lady Auberry ? My soul revolted at so treacherous a concealment, and, at our next meeting, your dear Mary saw all her new acquaintance stripped of disguise, not as they have appeared, but as they ought to appear, before her.

The conversation I have lately had with Mr. Lexington is so long, so interesting,
and

and the night so far advanced, that I shall make it the subject of another letter; perhaps it may go by the same post with this; I am impatient to put the subject of it into your hands, and shall certainly avoid every possible delay.

I have the honour to be, &c.

J. PETWORTH.

LETTER

LETTER XIII.

Miss Montague to Lady Auberry.

Jan. 19, 17—

DEAREST grand-mamma, I dispatch half-a-dozen lines to assure you, that the tremendous business of yesterday being over, I am as well as your own kind heart would prompt you to wish me. I have very much to tell you, but not a moment till now have I been able to steal for the purpose of communication; and what is worse than all the rest, I foresee the same difficulty in future. The Duchess is determined to have so much of me, at home and abroad, that I have not been permitted to be alone

five minutes the whole of this day. From the moment we had breakfasted, which was not till two in the afternoon, I have been attending her Grace on a tour of visits, that I might be presented to those in the circle of her acquaintance, who had not seen me before; a task even more formidable than that of yesterday, as, out of twelve houses, we were let up at ten of them.

I shall not see my dear monitress to-day. Her charming niece came to my bedside before I was up, to enquire how I did, and brought me a most affectionate message from her: they are gone out of town, and do not return till to-morrow. Miss Beau-lieu goes to take leave of some of her friends before she sets out for Riversdale. Ah! why cannot I be her companion to that dearest of all dear spots? With what joy would I renounce the world and its pleasures, to throw myself into your arms! but my father's commands must be obeyed; and when I do not think of my banishment
from

from you, I obey them without murmuring.

The Duchefs talks of giving a ball, and of fending out eight hundred cards of invitation. How will ſhe be able to entertain them all, I wonder? or how divide her attention ſo exactly as not to offend any of them?

Every moment of my time, that her Grace ſuffers me to diſpoſe of, ſhall be dedicated to your amuſement; I will carry you to court, to operas, aſſemblies, concerts, and balls; in ſhort, if your Mary is diſſipated, I ſhall force you to partake of her diſſipation. I hope to have ſeveral ſheets written for your inſpection by the time Miſs Beaulieu is ready to convey them to you, and as often as I go to my own room, whether to dreſs or ſleep, I will firſt tell you the buſineſs of the day. If my journals ſhould be incorrect, as I am ſure they will be, conſider what a variety of whimſical nothings occupy my thoughts, and diſtract my ideas. Make large allowances for a

I

noviciate

noviciate in the school of fashion ; and, dearest grand-mamma, pray that all the errors of your Mary may be those of the head, and never, never, have their source in a heart which you yourself have moulded, and which is so entirely devoted to you.

LETTER

LETTER XIV.

Lady Jane Petworth to Lady Auberry.

Jan. 19, 17—.

I Cannot prevail on my myself to send away my letter of yesterday without a companion to it, or rather a something that better deserves to be called a postscript, as the first was a volume, and the last will not extend to more than a single sheet, if I can even compass that, before I set out for Windsor, which I shall do in less than two hours; my chief errand there is to give my niece an opportunity of seeing some friends, with whom she is in habits of intimacy, and to bring back with me a young

Lady whom I have in my eye, to supply Miss Beaulieu's place at my table, as long as her presence at Riversdale can be of use or comfort to my ever dear Lady Auberry.

The subject of my present employment has been already hinted; I shall therefore enter on it without any further circumlocution.

I happened to be present when Mr. Lexington was first presented to Miss Montague; it was the same day on which she arrived at Richmond. A prophet will certainly respect his own prophecies, if all the rest of the world were to turn a deaf ear to them. I had an early *presentiment*, and you may remember that in one of my letters I hinted it to you. This spark of divination rekindled when I saw poor Henry, whose ease and vivacity had charmed me, stand like another Cymon, planet-struck, instead of advancing to pay her those compliments, which nobody knows better than himself how to embellish with all the graces of gallantry, and I said, (without uttering)

—"Yes,

—"Yes, sweet girl, thou shalt be Duchess of Cleveland."

I do not mean to tell you all the prettinesses of a lover's manœuvres, but only to observe, that in forty-eight hours I was perfect mistress of his secret, without being in his confidence.

Of a sudden he re-assumed his usual ease and cheerfulness, and I observed a singularity in his behaviour to Miss Montague, that did not please me. If the Duke or Duchess were present, it was marked by studied coldness, almost bordering on neglect; but whenever their backs were turned, his advances to her became that moment warm, tender, animated, nor did my being of the party seem to incumber him with restraint.

The interesting artlessness and *naivette* of your grand-daughter renders her so inaccessible to vanity, that I am convinced she does not even to this moment suspect him of having entertained the smallest partiality in her favour.

This unassumed simplicity has, in its consequences, diverted me more than once; for when his language has been as declaratory as any thing can be called that is not absolutely decisive, so far from understanding what he means, she actually gives him that kind of answers, which, from any other mouth than her own, might not found very cruel to the most despairing of lovers.

Mr. Lexington reads with precision the characters of her mind; he sees that it is a composition of the most refined modesty and beautiful unreserve; from the latter he can draw no good omen to himself, because it is a sort of unreserve that pervades her manners to all his sex in general, as well as to her own; and by not herself perceiving the chain with which she holds him, it draws him nearer to her, and will be rivetted for ever.

It was the frequent changes in his conduct to Miss Montague of which I complained to you in my last letter; and though
he

he has made a tolerable defence, I shall not absolutely acquit him of inconstancy till his trial is laid before your Ladyship, and you sign the verdict, guilty or not guilty against the laws of open and honourable proceedings.

In one of those conversations, in which, I have already said, your dear child would sometimes take a lively part, without distinguishing that she was the subject of Mr. Lexington's often-interrupted, but ever-passionate professions,—his insinuations became so exceedingly pointed, that, considering the promise I had given you, to be the guardian of her tranquillity, I thought it became the sacred office of so precious a trust, to find out what were the intentions of my gentleman, if I could do it without appearing impertinent or officious. An opportunity did not offer favourable to my design as long as we remained at Richmond; but yesterday, before I began writing to you, an unexpected one presented itself, which has not only

satisfied my doubts, but gratified my wishes.

As I am not a slave to fashion, and follow only such of her customs as are consonant to my own opinions, so I neither go to bed or get up at the hours she has established. At night I am seldom later than twelve; and in the morning I am at breakfast rather before than after ten o'clock. I tell you this, not to boast of my superior moderation or notability, but to account to your Ladyship for the very early visit I had the honor of receiving from Mr. Lexington. He had heard the Duchess of Cleveland rally me on my early rising; and when I came down to the little room where I always breakfast, I saw him seated by the fire-side, with a newspaper in his hand, which he had taken up from the tea-tray.

I expressed the pleasure I really felt at finding him there, but not unmixed with astonishment at the hour he had chosen for his visit—adding, that, after an effort so obliging,

obliging, I supposed, as soon as I had rewarded him with a dish of tea, he would return to his pillow, and sacrifice again to that repose, which his goodness to me must have interrupted.

Something had disturbed his sleep, he said, for the last three or four nights—but bade me find out what was this enemy to his rest, or he never should have the confidence to disclose it. I approved of this opening, but would not understand him, till he should think proper to be more explicit. I therefore began to busy myself in preparing his breakfast, and my own; I put a hundred questions to him—did he like this, that, and the other? he answered me with politeness, but as if it would be equally agreeable to him, whether I gave him tea or poison, sugar or wormwood.

I kept on chatting on the most insignificant matters, till he had taken his second dish—I then asked him, If he was not to be a courtier of the day? Certainly, he replied; and my sisters too, as well as

Lord and Lady Francis, and every other branch of the family, are to have the honor of attending in the suit of Miss Montague.

As he pronounced her name, he coloured and hesitated; I saw he wished me to seize the occasion—but I let it pass, and only observed, that I did not know Lord and Lady Francis were come to town.

They came late last night—I saw them only for a moment.

Then, of course, Miss Montague has not yet been presented to them?

Ah! Lady Jane, how you torture me!

What is there in the observation which should convey an idea of torture?

I complain that you will not talk to me on the only subject that occupies me—that you will not bestow your compassion on me—that you will not encourage me to speak to you.

I am too dull to find out the solution of riddles, and you are inexplicable; let us become friends, then, and change the conversation—

versation—you have not told me how you like Miss Montague.

Now you are a thousand times more cruel than before. Is it possible you should not know my opinion of Miss Montague?

Positively—No!

My God! there is no-body will give themselves the trouble to understand me!

Had you put it in my power to understand you—had I a clue to conduct me through the many mazes of a man's inclinations, you might not have found me so stupid—however, I will fairly tell you, the jumble of ideas, one of which is forever dispossessing the other, that have arisen to the view of my reflecting faculties, since I first saw you in the same society with the grand-daughter of Lady Auberry,——

He was going to speak, at least I fancied so, and begged I might not be interrupted till I had more fully explained myself. I then entered into a clear detail of the observations I had made, and the conclusions I had drawn from them, finishing with

this remark, that any man, who presumed to engage the attention of an amiable woman by private assiduities, which he was either afraid or ashamed to exhibit in the eyes of his own family, must have very little delicacy, or a great share of vanity, to imagine, for a moment, that she would accept those attentions by stealth, which it should be his glory openly to avow.

Why, for want of time, am I forced to pass over the scene that followed?—was it lengthened to one half hour, I would describe to you the words, the looks, the attitudes, the pathos of the too interesting culprit; he pleaded his cause—my heart acquitted him, at least of intentional inconstancy—I pitied, I loved him—and from that moment determined to become his advocate to the venerable parent of his adored Mary; but of this he must get no information—many obstacles are to be got over before he can prudently declare himself either to her or you. He has put his conduct under my management—I am to
have

have the entire arrangement of it, as far as it concerns caution and prudence—without which, the difficulties that oppose him will increase rather than diminish. In a few words, this is his present situation:

The Duke of Cleveland, though he has made his two nieces independent, and gives a splendid allowance to his nephew, yet always has declared against granting him a permanent establishment—moreover, he has assured him, in no equivocal phrases, that if he refuses to ratify an engagement, which he means to negotiate with the friends of a young lady, whose connection he is ambitious to obtain, he will withdraw all his bounty from him as long as he lives, and, before he dies, dis-mantle the title from every acre that is not absolutely tied to it.

I find this conversation happened but a few weeks ago. Poor Henry does not know who this intended wife can be—nor did he give himself any concern about it, till he saw Miss Montague; he is now
ready,

ready, Andates-like, to resign all present possessions and future expectations; but, as I am the least distracted of the two, perhaps I see clearer and further than he can.

I am going to prophecy again—this dreaded wife, and this beloved mistress, I verily believe, are one and the same person. I have no other reason for indulging myself with the idea, than the friendship which once subsisted between the Duke and Colonel Montague, which is much strengthened by his Grace's very marked approbation of your granddaughter; but till I have a more certain foundation for my hopes, I shall not venture to trust Mr. Lexington with those vague surmises—for though I can safely walk through the valley of shadows, a lover may stumble over them.

It has sometimes occurred to me, that I would question a certain young friend of mine, as to the state of her heart before she came hither; it does not appear to have
received

received any tender impressions—and yet it is almost unnatural to suppose, that every man, who has looked at and listened to her, has not, at least, attempted to impress it. When I have intended to say to her, As a proof of the friendship you honour me with, tell me if your affections are disengaged—an indescribable something prevented me—I should call it awe, if the sweetness of her countenance did not forbid the expression; but I may more properly term it the fear of offending against terrestrial diffidence and celestial modesty: No, said I, such a question may discompose Miss Montague—I will ask it of Lady Auberry.

My chaise has waited half an hour—it rains exceedingly hard—and my poor old coachman will not thank me for obliging him to get wet before his time. Adieu, most respectable of women!

J. PETWORTH.

LETTER

LETTER XIV.

Lord Auberry, to Sir Ashton Montague.

London, Jan. 19, 17—.

ASHTON,

I Have seen her once, twice, thrice—I have spoken to her, but so disguised, that she did not know the wretch who accosted her. I had my spies at Richmond—I knew all her movements—and was waiting on the pavement when she stepped from the carriage, in Grosvenor-square; my arms extended of themselves to catch the treasure of my soul; the motion was involuntary—I started at my own presumption—all my sins stood before me, and obstructed my

my approaches to the shrine of purity ; yet, though my arms dropped and my tongue faltered, I dared to tell her I had claims on her affections ! ten thousand curses on the diabolical contrivances that ensnared me to forfeit them ! distraction seizes me—you must take its consequences, and wait the return of my reason.—Come to me, if you can.

AUBERRY.

LETTER

LETTER XVI.

Miss Montague, to Lady Auberry.

Jan. 25, 17—.

YOU will receive, dearest grand-mamma, from the hands of Miss Beaulieu, whom I have embraced for the last time before she sets off for Riversdale, a little box, the contents of which, however insignificant, will be of value to you—as, amongst many lesser trifles, it conveys the portrait of your Mary, and six sheets of paper, which she has blotted, at fifty different times, with foolish anecdotes—remarks without experience—and philosophy without wisdom. I have charged her not to give it to you
till

till the morning after her arrival—for I know, if you should get it the same night, you will pay me a compliment, which will be fatal to my^e repose, by breaking in upon your own.

Miss Beaulieu has made an interest in my heart, equal to what might have been the claims of Nature, had she given me a sister to partake in the delightful office of attending you—and to partake also the sweetness of those caresses, which has hitherto formed all the happiness of

Your ever-dutiful

And affectionate

MARY MONTAGUE.

MISS

MISS MONTAGUE'S JOURNAL.

*January 18,**(Before I prepare for my first Launch into the
great World.)*

I Am going to carry you back to last Sunday and the Park, where I have already told you Lord Auberry passed us, and that he moved his hat to the carriage. What can be the meaning that all the gentlemen I see do no more, or perhaps not so much—but content themselves with nodding their heads at one? Sure, if we are worthy of their taking any trouble about us, I should think it a more respectful compliment, were they to take their hats quite off, or, at least, lift them above their heads—but, I am told, it is not the fashion—and I dare not express my dislike of what is the fashion, not even of this, though I cannot approve of any thing that is ungraceful in one sex, or derogatory to
the

the rights of the other. In my opinion, there can be no substitute for respect.

I said I had fallen into a reverie, from which your name, announced by the Duchefs of Cleveland, suddenly recalled me.

I wonder, child, if Lady Auberry expects I am to gain you an establishment this winter?

Me, Madam!—what does your Grace mean?

Why these good ladies, my dear, who sit at home by their own fire-side, dreaming over the old maps of their gay days, imagine the world is just the same now as it was a hundred years ago, when a prudent young body, if she was well born, well favoured, rich, managing, and staid at home, was always sure to get a husband, as stupid as herself, before she was out of her leaders.

Why is it that we sometimes laugh without being pleased? I did laugh, but was not delighted.

Well,

Well, Miss Montague, considering how much your education, I mean your knowledge of polite life, must have been circumscribed, you are a very extraordinary girl.

Next to the honor of having gained your Grace's approbation, I shall be ambitious to retain it; but if I can ever form any pretensions to deserving it, I have Lady Auberry to thank for my good fortune.

These notions are obsolete, and strongly tinged with the air of your country village—yet there is such a *naivette* in whatever you do and say, that, with all your want of knowledge in the *ton*, bids fair to make you as great a favourite with men of the world, as if you had as much of its polish as the most fashionable woman, I mean of your own age, that adorns our circles of fashion. But you have not answered my question—Do you really suppose your grand-mother would think we had done you justice, should we send you back to her, without having settled you, to the

the best of her expectations, and to your own advantage?

I only smiled, and said I was in no haste to incumber myself with weighty cares, and was sure you would not think me a weight on your hands, if I should remain single six or eight—I was going to say years, and perhaps to add some other folly to the foolish thing I had said before, when Lord Auberry, who had galloped off from his female companion, again passed us; he only looked into the carriage—but took no other notice of us.

That is a very pretty young man, observed the Duchess, and takes a great deal of pains that we should observe him.—Pray is he an acquaintance of your's, Miss Montague?

I believe, Madam, it is Lord Auberry—he is a very distant relation to my late grand-father, and succeeded him.

But why not tell me this when he rode by us once before?

Because

Because I have not seen him for more than two years—and was not quite certain that it was Lord Auberry.

I suppose, then, he has been travelling. I have heard so.

Oh, very well—you do not seem to know much of him; but, when I send out my cards, pray remember me that I send one of them to him.

I shall set this command down on my mind's tablet thus—*Memorandum to be forgotten.*

18th, or rather 19th (being two in the Morning.)

I think this has been the most busy day of my whole life—but to what purpose? a retrospection of the bustling events with which it has been crowded, affords nothing very well worth recording—yet, perhaps, of equal importance with any that have preceded, or may follow them, in the history

tory of my new existence. I live at Riverdale, and I only exist in London.

Oh, dear! how fine! I have been absolutely loaded with finery! I dare say there was not less in weight than two pounds of bits of tin, shaped like flowers, painted of all colours, with leaves of all sizes, that covered my petticoat! I had never seen any thing that resembled it till then, and blushed when the Duchefs bade me admire it—for you know, grand-mamma, my taste in dress—and how ill this shew must accord with it. I really was quite disgusted at first—but am now inclined to think very meanly of my own judgment in these affairs—as every body I met with was lavish of encomiums on the exquisite fancy her Grace had displayed in the choice of my ornaments. Would not the same praises have followed, had she clothed me in sackcloth? I am apt to suppose so.

My chair followed the Duchefs of Cleveland's; and, as we were going down

K

St. James's.

St. James's-street, I again saw Lord Auberry—he was walking on the pavement, in an undress, which I was glad to see, as it indicated that I should not have the mortification of meeting him in the drawing-room—that would have been a very awkward circumstance—for I do not suppose I should have had the honor of being acknowledged by him as an acquaintance, which might have made the Duchesse more inquisitive than I wish her to be; and, on the other hand, had he insulted me with his attentions, I should have been equally distressed—for never will I, a second time, be the victim of his duplicity. I shall not study to avoid him—and, as certainly, I shall not rejoice to meet him.

When we reached one of the outer rooms, we found many, indeed, I believe, the whole of the Duke's family, waiting there to receive us; and I was transported to find every one of the ladies, particularly Miss Lexington and her sister, if possible, more covered with this detestable painted
tin

tin than I was. I was presented to Lord and Lady Francis Lexington, and to a Lady Elizabeth Jones; fortunately for me, I was already known to the rest of the party, or what would have become of me! Mr. Lexington thought I was going to faint, and caught hold of my hand—but I laughed at his odd idea, and assured him I was very well, only a little frightened—I might have said a great deal; but, novice as I am, I see it is best to conceal as much of one's weakness as one can.

My heart did not lie still, or my sight return to its usual clearness of perception, till I had gone through the whole ceremony; but the obliging enquiries their Majesties had the goodness to make for my beloved parent delighted me more than any thing else, and gave me a freedom of breathing, which I had not felt before from the moment I began to ascend the stairs at St. James's.

The Duchess would have persuaded me to dance, when we returned in the even-

ing; she had, unknown to me, procured a ticket for the purpose. I make it a rule to obey her in every thing—but, on this occasion, I was invincibly refractory.

Our whole party (the ladies having first gone home to drop their hoops) came afterwards to sup with us. Tired and fatigued as we all were, it would have been difficult enough to have found amusement for ourselves—however, Mr. Lexington contrived to keep us all awake to this unconscionable hour!

19th—(*Before Breakfast.*)

Lord Francis Lexington is the Duke's second brother, indeed the only one that is now living. I can be no judge of his understanding—but I have heard it much called in question by Mrs. Oxburn, who is a great wit herself, and takes him off, as she

she calls it, even at the Duke's table, without check or rebuke, either from his Grace or the Duchefs, who are much delighted with her humour for ridicule, especially as it spares nobody, and glances as often at her own mother, as at any one else.—I leave her for the present.

Lord Francis is certainly a very handsome middle-aged man, has a most engaging countenance, and insinuating address; his faults, if he has them, are concealed from me; I have not Mrs. Oxburn's penetration to develope them; I think him charming, and so thinks my dear Lady Jane Petworth,—she detests Mrs. Oxburn, and so does your Mary.

Lady Francis brought her Lord an immense fortune, but I do not like her, she is so foolishly fond of him, and has something so fiddle-faddle in her motions, so drawling in her voice, that one never wishes to see her move or hear her speak;—she calls her Lord Francy, and it is Francy my dear, and Francy my love,

every time she opens her lips.—Mrs. Oxburn sat near enough to whisper in my ear, her Ladyship is a little *in for it*;—I do not understand the meaning of her phrase, and shall never ask for the explanation of it.

Dressing Time.

The Duchesse has kept me employed the whole of this morning, in filling up printed cards of invitation with names taken from the porter's books, which are almost as large as Sir Walter Raleigh's History of the World; these cards are for a masked ball, on the 28th of February; there are others, I find, already gone out, for an assembly on the 2d of the present month.—Her Grace put me in mind of Lord Auberry, and desired I would send him cards for both her public nights;—I said I did

did not know in what part of the town he lived,—that might be easily remedied, she observed, for it was impossible a man of his consequence could be concealed in a garret, or buried in a cellar; come, added she, let them be written this moment, and I will give such orders as shall find him out, if he is not taken alive into Heaven.

I believe there is no danger of that sort, said Mr. Lexington, who was good-naturedly assisting me in my employment; I knew Auberry when I was in Italy, and if he has not been doing penance since that time, he will have no better pretensions than I have to get there, without paying all the pains and all the penalties of mortality.

I could not help smiling, yet was never so confused and distressed in my life;—I dared not absolutely refuse to obey the Duchess;—it was impossible that I should obey her, and I hesitated so long for an excuse, that she took the pen out of my hand and filled up the cards herself: There,

said she, giving them to a servant, with directions to find out Lord Auberry, there, Miss Montague, the deed is done, and I am quite displeased with you for starting so many difficulties to the great desire I feel that the name of Lord Auberry should be enrolled on my list of visitors.

I thought I should have cried from vexation, but, as she said, the deed was done, and I knew it could not be undone; what had I to do but hide my chagrin as well as I was able, with only one solitary hope to rest on, which is, that Lord Auberry will have too much consideration, at least for himself, to accept an invitation that must reduce him to the necessity of meeting me?

Just going to Rest!

I blush at the Hour, and shall pass it over.

We sat down to day sixteen at table,—
Lord and Lady Francis, Mr. Lexington
and

and his two sisters, Lady Rachael Thomson and her lively daughter Mrs. Oxburn, Lady Elizabeth Jones, Mrs. Tovee, Lord Selby, Lord Silvester, Mr. Melvine, and Sir Ashton Montague; the last of these gentlemen was named to me by the Duke of Cleveland as my relation, being descended from the same family; adding, in a low voice, this young man would have been heir to your father, had you remained in your own sphere, and not come down to cut him out of the entail.—I did not know before there had been such a claimant, and that I had innocently been the means of dispossessing him; I cannot believe he likes me the better for it, for though he was very civil, and talked to me a great deal, there was a reserve and melancholy about him, that did not testify much internal satisfaction. I was placed between Mr. Lexington and him;—what I thought exceedingly odd, was the number of unmeaning questions he asked me about Lord Auberry;—I was very short

in my replies, and answered him with so much indifference, that the conversation on that disagreeable subject soon became languid, and without any force expired of itself.

To-morrow, dear grand-mamma, I shall make you acquainted with all those of our party who have not yet had the honor of being presented to you on paper;—they almost live with us; we are so entangled together that you will hardly be able to understand the life and adventures of your Mary, unless I name them to you; I must do more, I must be honest, and tell you not only my own opinion of them, but also such parts of their private anecdotes as my guardian angel, Lady Jane Petworth, has unfolded to me, for the regulation of my conduct at present, and the establishment of my happiness in future.

For the first time I have been this night to the Opera, and afterwards to no less than three different assemblies, but was not much delighted with either;—I might
have

have been charmed with the Opera, with the music, and dancing, if I could have heard the one or seen the other; but the voices of the spectators from every corner of the house, above and below, who, I observed, never once looked towards the stage, overpowered those of the performers, and there were so many gentlemen, besides our own party in the box, who stood up in the pit to pay their compliments to the Duchess, and remained talking to her the whole evening, that my sight was as much impeded as my hearing.

With all the care I take to throw a veil over my ignorance, I am sometimes so unfortunate as to draw aside the curtain: for instance, till this night I had never seen or known the use of an Opera glass;—two fashionable looking girls, from an opposite box, planted each of them one full at me; I turned round to a gentleman who had dined with us, and asked him, in the simplicity of simpleness, what little weapons those were which those two ladies, pointing

them out to his notice, seemed to examine with so much attention ;—he very politely tutored my folly, and instructed me as to the use for which they were intended ;—it is a fashion that will never be adopted by your Mary, though it is certainly a very general one, as the two I had first observed were no longer remarkable, for very soon there appeared almost as many of those impertinent glasses as there were eyes to direct them from.

20th, Morning.—From my own Room.

I have had a most extraordinary dream !
—I fancied myself in the same house, and in the same company where we concluded our last night's fatiguing round of pleasure ;
—every body paid their court to me, every body flattered me, and I grew quite tired
of

of hearing my own praises.—I was thinking how I could get away from them, when one of the two ladies, who looked at me through her Opera glass, came up close to me, and smiling in my face, tried to strike a dagger in my bosom!—I avoided the stroke by receiving the wound on my hand; and so strong was this imaginary assassination impressed on my mind, that when I waked, which was in consequence of the force with which the blow was aimed, I could scarce believe myself unhurt, but examined my hand, and fancied I felt it smart exceedingly. I have told Jenny my dream; she says it signifies a false friend, and wishes we were once more safe at Riversdale;—the phrase of a false friend is a too common one, and nothing in my opinion can be more full of error; concealed enemies there undoubtedly are, but a false friend is impossible. However, as I do not look on Jenny or myself to be endowed with the gift of divination, I shall endeavour to account for my vision rather by the rules of consistency

consistency and plain reasoning, than by any supernatural interference.

At one of those assemblies to which the Duchefs of Cleveland carried me, and which was the very last of the three on the list of our engagements for that evening, —the very first faces I recollected were those of the two ladies whom I had so lately seen at the Opera-House, and I had once more the ill fortune to become the object of their scrutiny ;—I call it ill fortune, because there is nothing in the world that I shrink from so much as certain looks, which, in all circles of fashion, are given and returned by the ladies who have not been presented to each other :—These girls followed me from room to room, as long as we continued to partake of the very great amusement of being stifled, except the comfort of absolute suffocation. At night I always entertain my foster-sister with any thing strange or wonderful that I have seen in the day ; I told her of the ladies and the Opera glasses ;
she

she said, they must be very bold ladies indeed, and was glad, for my sake, it was not a sword or a gun, instead of a spy-glass, that they held up to frighten me. With the words sword and gun sounding in my ears I fell asleep, and the terrifying dream I have repeated was certainly the consequence.

Five o'Clock.

Forenoon in Town, Afternoon in the Country.

Mrs. Oxburn called to ask if I would walk with her; the Duchefs said it would do my health good, but I thought of my dear Lady Jane's advice, and determined not to go.—Never, said she, step beyond the bounds of common civility with that dangerous woman; restrain, in her presence, as much as you can, the innocent

warmth of your heart; it is such dispositions as yours that cannot be too guarded against the arts of your own sex, I mean such of them who have need of support to keep the very slippery path they are yet permitted to tread, in that society from which it would be more prudent to banish them. Such is Mrs. Oxburn;—her education was early neglected; she ran away from her parents, married a needy gentleman, by much too good for her, and has ever since led a gay, dissipated, and, I can assure you, a very dissolute life; every body receives her, because her husband has not thought fit to abandon her. There is no mother who has sons old enough to be taken in by the charms of her person, and the brilliancy of her wit—or daughters whose morals are worth preserving, that, though they are afraid to stem the torrent of fashion, do not shudder at the contagion of libertinism, which she is so able and willing to spread through every house, the doors of which are opened to let her in.

Lady

Lady Rachael Thomson I should have thought a mighty good sort of woman, but that Lady Jane told me her daughter's education had been neglected.

I have said I do not like Lady Francis Lexington, and I have hinted as much of her two nieces; they are so very affected, and so very haughty to every body except the Dukes of Cleveland, their brother, two uncles, and Lady Francis, that I never shall like them.

Lady Elizabeth Jones is so difficult to be pleased, that it is in vain to attempt it, at least the Duke tells me so, and from what I have observed, I must be of the same opinion;—she will entirely manage, or she will have nothing to do with you; she will allow of no will but her own, and even when you submit to be governed by it, she will still find out some method to contradict herself, for the pleasure of dissenting from you. Many are the battles between her Grace and this strange old Lady, but I can see plain enough in whose
favour

favour the contest would always end, if the latter had not a great deal of money to bequeath, and the former great hopes of succeeding to it; indeed she has a right to expect it, being the nearest relation, and, I believe, the only surviving one that Lady Elizabeth acknowledges.

Mrs. Tovee is the oddest creature I ever saw in my life; I hate to sit by her at table, for so great is her eagerness to deafen you with the discordant tones of her voice, that you are in danger of being deluged; I have felt the effects of it sparkle on my face, and I am sure my plate has not escaped the same dirty consequence. She is not dictatorial, like Lady Elizabeth Jones; on the contrary, it appears, by her very accommodating manners, that there is nobody's opinion she has so little respect for as her own.

Mr. Lexington you are already acquainted with; I am sure you would like him, for he is invariably polite and good humoured; he has an establishment worthy of

of his own deservings and the Duke's munificence; he lives by himself, as his sisters do by themselves;—is is a wonder to me that, so fond as they are of him, they have not learned to adopt his art of pleasing.

Lord Selby takes some pains to persuade me that I ought think him the most charming man in the world, but he does not find me a docile scholar; I can never begin to find out his merit, till he leaves off to admire himself.

Lord Silvester has desired to engage me for the two first dances at the next ball where we happen to meet;—and this, though I have passed many days in company with him, is all I can tell you of Lord Silvester.

And now I think I have mentioned all that were of our party yesterday, except Sir Ashton Mantague and Sir James Melvern; I was almost afraid to look at or speak to the former, lest he might talk to me of Lord Auberry; and the latter always forces me to turn my head from him, as I have no particular
penchant

penchant for being stared out of countenance ;—and yet Sir James never means to offend. This habit of staring is, I believe, a trick of absence in him, and that he does not know what he is looking at.

Thanks, dearest grand-mamma, for your dear letter*, and for the charming account you send me of your health and good spirits.

Half after Twelve.

The Duchefs of Cleveland has been a little indisposed, and we have not gone out, neither have we been alone ; the same people again to-day as yesterday, except Sir Ashton Montague, who does not seem

* This letter is omitted.

to be on the same footing of intimacy here as the others are.

Her Grace's complaint was a violent head-ach, nevertheless she has borne a good deal of talking, and four card tables, the whole evening.

Mrs. Tovee said to her after dinner, in the most pathetic tone imaginable,—
“ My dear Duchess, well, to be sure, I am grieved to see how much you suffer, and how little you have eat for your dinner; but then you are such a pattern of meekness and patience, that we must all be the better for your trials.”

What is it o'clock? said Mr. Lexington, pulling out his watch, that his inclination to laugh might pass unobserved. The evident motive for a question so *mal-a-propos* set every body who heard him in a greater state of agitation than himself, and whilst he contrived to look as grave as a judge, a general titter prevailed round the table; the Duchess smiled, and Mrs. Tovee did not appear to be one of those who were the
least

least pleased with the mirth going on at her expence, but joined in it, unconscious of being the founder of it.

Lady Elizabeth Jones called this morning, and insisted on my going to air with her; I made a thousand excuses, but might as well have let them alone, and I do not remember, in my whole life, to have ever passed two hours more disagreeably. We dragged heavily along, through roads as deep as a well, and in a fog so thick, that the coachman stopped twice to find out his way, though her Ladyship said, he must be the most stupid animal in the creation, for that he regularly carried her the same road every day, which I found was towards a village called Hampstead, about seven or eight miles from town.—

The conversation within was not more enlivening than the objects without.

I sometimes think that I feel more constraint when I am with the Duchess of Cleveland, than is necessary to my own comfort; but I find, since this morning's expedition,

expedition, that I am not one half so much afraid of her as I am of Lady Elizabeth Jones.

She began with asking me how I liked London, and I said I liked it exceedingly; —she fixed her staring blue eyes in my face.

I am surprised to hear so young a Lady as you, Miss Montague, make such a confession.

I really only intended to answer your Ladyship's question; and I hope there is nothing absurd in confessing one's sentiments, if they are not in themselves reprehensible.

Your arguments are not quite conclusive. Suppose, for instance, that I, who am very much your senior in years and experience, should hold it reprehensible that Miss Montague, not yet nineteen, bred in the bosom of solitude, should, in the course of a few days, imbibe such a predilection for the vain pleasures of a distracted world, as
to

to prefer them to the innocent scenes of a pastoral life in the country.

Dear Madam, I have said no such thing.

But you gave me reason to suppose it.

Then I beg to undeceive your Ladyship, for be assured, I had rather pass one day at Riversdale, than a hundred in London.

That is very odd indeed ; I should have imagined, from what I have heard of your amiable disposition, the very distinguishing marks of favour you receive from the Duke and Duchess of Cleveland, should have prevented you, in my presence at least, from giving a preference so strong and so decided.

This is only a specimen of the manner in which we entertained each other in our funeral procession; for though the subject was often changed, the mode of conducting it never varied.

Jan.

Jan. 21.—Noon.

I had a new chair brought home last night, and the first use I have made of it this morning, was to carry me to Bruton-street; I found my dear Lady Jane in bed; she came home so late in the evening, loaded with a heavy cold, that she is nursing herself, and does not mean to stir out of her house to-day, but promises to dine with us to-morrow.

I breakfasted by her bed-side, with Miss Beaulieu and Miss Fortescue, a very elegant girl, nearly of my own age, who, I find, is to supply the place of my new friend, whilst she is performing for me those tender offices at Riversdale, for which, if it was in my power to avoid it, I would allow of no representative.

Lady Jane has desired me to ask the Duchess for leave to bring Miss Fortescue

L

with

with her to-morrow; I am going down to execute my commission, and hope I shall find her in a good humour.

Four o'Clock.—From my Toilet.

I never desire to be a great Lady, if, for the title even of a Queen, I am expected to barter the feelings of kindness, gratitude, and affection.

Her Grace's politics and mine do not agree;—we have been canvassing them over—we have had a grand battle—the day is my own;—but who am I to thank for it!—Never should I have carried my point, if I had not been reinforced by Mr. Lexington.

I found her Grace sitting before her toilet, the labours of which were nearly finished;

nished; she told me her head-ach was quite gone, and if I waited five minutes, she would go with me to the breakfast-room—then enquired how long I had been up, and what I had been doing?—I said, nine was generally my hour—and that I had been as far as Bruton-street, to enquire how Lady Jane Petworth did, after her excursion to Windsor:—The message I brought from her was two or three or times at the very door of my lips, but as she never asked for her, or made any reply when I mentioned her, I sent it back again till a more favourable moment should present itself. She talked to her woman about her dress for the evening, and not another word passed between us till we sat down to breakfast.

I prefer any situation to a *tête-à-tête* with some particular people, who are less disposed to be pleased with the society of one friend, than many flatterers.

Her Grace looked rather peevish, and began filling out the tea, and at the same

time addressed herself to me, but without lifting her eyes from the table.

I think, Miss Montague, you said something about your having been in Bruton-street.

I went there this morning, to ask after the health of Lady Jane, and to thank Miss Beaulieu for her kind intentions of going down to Riversdale.

Well, that was not much amiss; but, my dear, you are so very fond, I observe, of making friendships with what you think good sort, and what I call strange sort of people, that you will really become quite unfit for the very exalted station the Duke and I have it in our minds to raise you to.

I am sure your Grace does not mean to include Lady Jane, or her niece, in your definition of strange people.

Then you mistake me, for poor Lady Jane is quite a figure—and neither of them are like any body one knows.

I could have replied, It was too true, and that to my misfortune,—having never met
with

with any of my own sex like them in all the fashionable circles where, in vain, I expected to find many, who were equally entitled to my respect and confidence, though none could have the same claims as they had on my gratitude and affection. —I did not dare to say this, I only ventured to think it—and the lecture continued, without any interruption on my part.—Lady Jane knows she is no favourite, and has given me a thousand charges never to offend the Duchefs by defending her.

I shall not tell you, Miss Montague, the establishment we intend for you,—that will be soon enough for you to know when you are of age; in the mean time, it is the Duke's request, and my own, that you will not encourage dangles, or form any silly connection that will put it out of our power to be of use to you.

I felt hurt and mortified at the insinuation of my encouraging dangles; my face was covered with blushes, and my eyes filled with tears; but I contented myself with

saying, I should at no period, however near or distant, form any connection, or accept any proposals, but such as were fully sanctioned by Lady Auberry.

Well, my dear, you are really more reasonable than most young folks, who know so little of the world, and we shall have pleasure in settling you beyond her most sanguine expectations.

Dear grand-mamma, who can be meant by this very great man, intended for the husband of your Mary? I should imagine he can be nothing under the Great Mogul; and by the time I have passed three more winters in the circles to which I have lately been initiated, his Highness comes to fetch me. I think I shall have no objection to return and reign with him over his infidel subjects, rather than continue, as I now am, the slave of dissipation.

You are a great favourite with the Duke, Miss Montague—he thinks you the most amiable and accomplished young person about town; and if I could prevail on you

to

to leave off some old customs, and adopt some new ones, I should be very much of his opinion.

How subtle is the voice of flattery ! Who can hear it, and remain dissatisfied ? All my little angry emotions subsided ;—I asked for her instructions, and would have followed them if they had been, as her Grace would have me believe, so very much to my advantage.

To set this advice down in her own harangue would take up more minutes than I have to bestow on one subject ; but the substance of it may be comprised in a few words :—I was too much held under controul by the false maxims of old-fashioned prejudices ; too much on my guard with people whom every body knew ; and too ready to give myself up to those whom nobody cared for ;—she had sometimes thought me cold, even to unpoliteness, to Mrs. Oxburn, who was, without any competitor, a woman of the most brilliant and extensive knowledge of the world, and the most capable

capable to fashion a young person after her own manner, if she would not listen to such starch pieces of formality as Lady Jane Petworth, who, she was sure, had filled up my head with a parcel of nonsense.

Before her Grace had quite finished, or I had an opportunity to reply, which I found myself inclined to do with more severity than perhaps would have accorded with her expectations or my own benefit, Mr. Lexington was announced, and I must confess I regarded him like an angel of peace, sent down from Heaven to my relief. *Entre nous*—It appears to me that he is the only person in the world of whom the Duchess is really fond, or of whom she is afraid.

All now was harmony and good humour ; her Grace forgot to school me, and I forgot to be refractory.

When I ventured to make my grand motion, he had the goodness to support it, or I never should have prevailed.

She

She had no idea of having girls intruded on her at those hours dedicated to her family and particular circle of friends;—that her public nights was another affair, and then Miss Fortescue, or Miss any body else, might come if they chose; they would serve to fill up the rooms, and not incommode her.

We have put off five engagements for this evening; the Duchess fears the pain in her head may return, so we only go to the Opera, and have company, as usual, to supper.

I have dispatched a note to dear Lady Jane, but not a word of our difficulty to obtain admission for Miss Fortescue; I only say, that to-morrow the Duchess expects them. Mr Lexington would carry it himself;—was it not exceedingly good-natured?—but perhaps he is impatient to see Miss Fortescue, as I have said a great deal to him of her beauty and elegance.

I wonder if the ladies have cards for Lady Elderton's ball; I forgot to ask them
this

this morning; we did not get our's till late last night, and it is for next Tuesday, the day after our own assembly;—the very short notice is accounted for in a note from Lady Elderton, sent with the invitations. Her apology is, that her son, who has only been two days returned from the Continent, desires her to give him this extraordinary proof of her indulgence, and hopes her Grace, whilst she has a right to condemn her compliance with the too volatile wishes of a young man, will forgive a want of *etiquette*, which is the unavoidable consequence of a mother's weakness. —There is something in this note that pleases me, and makes me wish to see the writer of it.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



